

Israel announces creation of private bank

AMMAN (AFP) — Israel announced Tuesday the creation of a private commercial bank for the Middle East with the help of the European Union, Palestinian, Cypriot, Jordanian, Israeli, Egyptian and Greek investors will provide a total start-up capital of \$20 million, with another \$100 million coming from the European Investment Bank, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said. Israel's industrial development bank will be involved in the project which was a Cypriot initiative, Mr. Peres told reporters at the Amman economic summit. The private bank will work in parallel with the Middle East and North Africa development bank, whose creation was announced on the first day of the summit Sunday. European countries and Gulf states criticised the development bank and said they would not contribute to its capital. But Mr. Peres welcomed the fact that they did not try to block the project at the three-day conference here.

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MENA summit proclaimed a huge success

King voices Jordan's pride for having hosted the event

By Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit concluded in Amman on Tuesday, with His Majesty King Hussein describing it as a great success and participants expressing high optimism that the event had contributed to consolidating the spirit of regional cooperation and paving the way for strong interaction between governments and the private sector.

The King, making a brief appearance at the press centre of the summit, also said the event was an opportunity to show the international community "a face of this country and its people, one that welcomes friends interested in the present and the future, interested in sharing with us the determination and the commitment to bring about a better life for all the peoples of this region, a life of stability, progress and stability."

"I believe this conference has been a great success," said the King shortly before the final session of the summit.

The King told the journalists Jordan was proud to have hosted them and that it hoped that "you always feel at home among friends when you are in this country, which enjoys democracy, lives pluralism and respect for human rights" and that the Kingdom would strive to make itself a positive example for the entire region.

The King thanked everyone who took part in the summit, including the private sector, governments and others. He

said it was a "conference that comes in line with what Jordan and the overwhelming majority of Jordanians had accepted and forged the way of peace between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Israel within the context of all their hopes for a comprehensive peace in this entire region."

Replying to a question on rival offers by Egypt and Qatar to host the next MENA summit, the King said: "We were able to overcome what was called the misunderstanding and matters went back to normal. I am happy and proud, as a matter of fact, for what has taken place. The response of our brothers, given the interest we are one heart and one interest in the Arab World -- and the response of our brothers in Qatar is wonderful because it gave up aspirations to its bigger brother, Egypt, for the next summit, which is going to be held next year."

"Everybody has agreed that the next one (in 1997) will be held in Qatar," the King added (see related story on page 14).

Answering another question on human rights in Jordan the King said:

"This country is very proud of what it has achieved. We are proud of democracy and we are committed to it. We cherish human beings, and in that each person should play a role in formulating his or her future within the legal framework and in the light of the Constitution."

"I believe that we are passing through a stage or phase, that we are heading towards a direction. We cannot say that everything is perfect but we are trying as much as (Continued on page 8)



Crown Prince: MENA presented its immense potential to the world

Cooperation is the means to rehabilitate region's economies and link them with international system

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan said Tuesday that the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit had succeeded in presenting the area to the world as a region with enormous potential that can be realised to the benefit of countries of the area, their people and the cause of peace.

Speaking at a press conference after chairing the closing session of the summit, Prince Hassan also said that participants at the conference got to know the numerous investment opportunities available in the Kingdom where profitable business can take place.

The conference consolidated the conviction that Jordan can be a place for investment and economic and trade interaction, Prince Hassan said, adding that this would bring direct and indirect benefits to the Jordanian citizen.

The Crown Prince cited the

loans that were provided to Jordan as well as agreements reached on joint projects as examples of the benefits the Kingdom made from the summit.

Prince Hassan stressed the importance of rehabilitating the economies of the region and connecting them with the global economy and capital markets. He said the summit provided a forum for interaction among private sector and official participants, noting that "dialogue facilitates development."

But, the Crown Prince said, the effort to bring about economic development will not be at the expense of political issues that still need to be resolved.

"We are talking about a new economic approach that will globalise the economies of the area," said Prince Hassan, stressing the benefits that will be gained from connecting the regional and local economies with the global economic system.

Responding to a question on the role of the regional

development bank that was established by the summit, Prince Hassan said the establishment of the bank aims at generating new funds for the region. He said the bank will not take the role of any of the existing regional financial institutions.

The Crown Prince reviewed the decisions that the summit made and the debates that took place in its session. The debates focused on the role of the international community in supporting the peace process, trade and finance, investment environment, tourism, and the development of human resources among others, he said.

The Crown Prince stressed that the MENA summit was an economic forum that tackled economic issues and regional cooperation as means to rehabilitate the economies of the area so as to improve the quality of life and achieve economic growth.

But he said that economic solutions will not be at the expense of political issues

that have to be dealt with. Responding to a question on Jerusalem, Prince Hassan said that "there is no Arab or Muslim country that does not support the Arab and Muslim rights in Jerusalem."

Jerusalem is a symbol for all believers and creative solutions are needed to solve the conflict over it, he said, adding that Jordan is committed to all Arab and Muslim agreements on the Holy City.

He noted that the future of Jerusalem will be decided in talks by the Palestinians and Israel in the final status phase of their peace talks.

Prince Hassan said that all Jordanians are concerned with the suffering of the Iraqi people and "no one can accuse Jordan of turning a blind eye to the Iraqi people."

But the reality is that Iraq is under United Nations sanctions and Jordan can in no way be responsible for the situation in Iraq, the Prince said, adding that the Kingdom was the country most

(Continued on page 8)

Regional institutions established, financing mechanism is outlined

By P.V.Vivekanand and Ayman Al Safadi
 Jordan Times Staff Reporters

THE MIDDLE East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit, the region's largest-ever gathering, ended here Tuesday evening with a consensus among Arab, Israeli and international governments and businessmen that it was a landmark event and contribution to the economic development of the region in a spirit of peace, security and stability.

Government leaders and senior business executives from 64 countries, including host Jordan, attended the three-day meeting, which was described as totally businesslike by most participants.

The four core parties in the Arab-Israeli peace process — the Palestinians, Israel, Jordan and Egypt — as well as Oman and Qatar presented development and infrastructure projects as well as commercial ventures worth more than \$40 billion during the summit. But the onus was on the private sector to assume the leading role in taking advantage of the opportunities available.

The main objective of the summit, as seen from the Jordanian perspective, which was shared by many others, was bringing together potential international and regional business partners to review possibilities of cooperation. Another key goal was establishing a partnership between governments and the private sectors, with the state doing what is needed in its domain to encourage investments and facilitate business requirements while businessmen de-

termining for themselves which projects suited them most.

Projects were presented in every sector of the economy — power plants, highways, railroads, water facilities and distribution, telecommunications, the environment, tourism and other areas.

Among the most notable achievements of the summit in the context of institutionalising regional cooperation were the establishment of a regional development bank with a \$55 billion capital expected to take off before 1998, a regional business council and a regional tourism board.

In addition, it was agreed that Amman would host the secretariat of the Regional Economic Development Working Group. Six regional countries also entered a tourism agreement, again with the focus on the private sector.

The final communique of the summit, the Amman declaration, launched the Middle East and North Africa development bank and pledged to promote increased private sector involvement in the region's economic development.

"The goals of the summit were to facilitate the expansion of private sector investment in the region, to cement a public-private relationship which will ensure that end, and to work to enhance regional cooperation and development," said the declaration.

(Continued on page 8)

'Jordan performs,' U.S. officials assert

By Amy Henderson
 Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan received high praise for its efforts of economic reform from two high-ranking U.S. officials on Tuesday, the closing day of the Middle East/North Africa (MENA) economic summit.

U.S. Under-Secretary of State for Economic Affairs Joan Spero said development of the region, "rests in the hands of the people of the region," and praised Jordan for its efforts at economic reform in parallel with foreign assistance to right its economy.

"Jordan is doing a lot on its own," she said, citing Jordan's legislative steps that include tax reform, investment incentives and work on a bilateral investment treaty between the Kingdom and the U.S.

"Jordan has shown itself as a country that works," said Dennis Ross, U.S. State Department special Middle East coordinator, who jointly addressed a press conference with Ms. Spero prior to the closing of the summit.

"Jordan performs," he stated. "This summit was successful in part because of Jordan itself."

Ms. Spero countered a suggestion that the U.S. and the international community should be doing more to contribute financial aid to Jordan and the region, stating that the U.S. had already written off \$700 million in the Kingdom's debts.

"We are working with our G-7 colleagues to provide funding or debt forgiveness," she said, adding that Britain had also written off \$75 million and Japan is supplying loans to Jordan to bolster

foreign currency reserves.

She said also that the U.S. was trying to support economic development of the region through government-sponsored organisations such as the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), which is preparing to guarantee a multi-million dollar private-sector equity fund for Jordan, Egypt and the Palestinian territories (see separate story).

Both officials deemed the summit a success that "may even have exceeded our expectations."

"We came here with two objectives," said Ms. Spero. "The first was to bring people together ... the second was to launch the institutions." Ms. Spero was referring to the three regional institutions inaugurated during the summit: The controversial regional development bank to be based in Cairo; a regional business council; and a regional tourism board. Jordan, which will be home to the Regional Economic Working Group (REDWG), one of the working groups of the multi-lateral track of the Middle East peace process, is vying to see either the tourism board or the business council based in Amman.

The bank, the centrepiece of MENA which has drawn criticism from several Gulf and European countries, was formally announced in Tuesday's Amman Declaration, and its release last night.

The U.S., Jordan, the Palestinians, Egypt and Israel, strongly support the establishment of the Bank, but some Gulf countries resisted including Israel, in the finances before a comprehensive regional peace is signed.

(Continued on page 7)

Peres: Conference a major contribution to turning political peace into economic peace

By P.V.Vivekanand
 Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres on Tuesday described the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit as a great contribution to the concept of regional economic cooperation and development and to turning "political peace into economic peace."

"I think there had never been a stronger statement on Amman as an economic centre," Mr. Peres told reporters. "It has changed the value and location of Jordan in the minds of many people in the Middle East and abroad."

The Israeli foreign minister, addressing a press conference, denied he had proposed setting up major Israeli infrastructure projects in Jordanian territory and said that he was only suggesting joint facilities for the two countries instead of each developing its own.

Mr. Peres also told a press

conference that Israel preferred to see a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation in the Palestinian territories, but that this was an issue that had to be discussed and agreed upon by Jordan and the Palestinian leadership.

The Israeli foreign minister, who was here to attend the MENA summit, said the issue of property owned by Jordanians in Jerusalem, which is under Israeli control since 1967 and described as "absentee property" despite the signing of a peace treaty between the King and the Jewish state, would be addressed "when the issue is brought up on the agenda."

Mr. Peres said the Israeli government was planning to set up its "largest" consulate in Amman so that visas could be issued to Jordanians "on the spot" rather than after a lengthy process that takes weeks now.

He described the summit as a great contribution to the concept of regional economic cooperation and

turning "political peace into economic peace."

"I think there had never been a stronger statement on Amman as an economic centre...it has changed the value and location of Amman in the minds of many people in the Middle East and abroad," he said.

Mr. Peres' approach at Tuesday's press conference, held at the Forte Grand Hotel and attended by a few Jordanian journalists, was dramatically different from the obviously aggressive, often lecturing, posture he adopted at an encounter Monday attended by hundreds of Jordanian, Palestinian, Arab and foreign correspondents.

The minister told Tuesday's press conference that the "message" he wanted to deliver to Jordanians was essentially that of what could be achieved through regional economic cooperation.

"There are (economic) revolutions taking place in Latin America" and other

parts of the world and "there are more economists in Asia than in New York," he said, adding "it is total nonsense" that "the colour of the skin" was a major factor in impeding development of Third World countries.

"I wonder why we cannot have such revolutions in the Middle East," which is endowed with "intelligent people" and "natural resources," he said, calling for mobilising "goodwill, understanding and dialogue."

Asked whether recent comments attributed to him meant that Israel would like to set up some of its infrastructure projects in Jordanian territory but catering to Israeli needs, Mr. Peres said: "No, no, no."

On the contrary, he said, he was referring to joint infrastructure projects that benefit both sides. "For example the airport," he said. "If Jordan wants to have an international airport...other

(Continued on page 8)

WEF chief outlines roles of government and private sector

Following is a speech delivered by World Economic Forum (WEF) President Klaus Schwab at the final plenary session of the Middle East and North Africa Summit:

The Amman Middle East/North Africa economic summit launches one of the world's most crucial regions on the path towards sustained economic development. It also testifies to the region's determination to claim its place in the global village by speaking with deeds rather than with words. The international business community welcomes the fact that the Summit created regional institutions to foster economic cooperation and develop and exploit the region's vast business opportunities. By doing so, it sends a strong message: "The Middle East is opening up for business."

Yet, recognising that peace is good for business is not sufficient to attract the foreign investment needed to rebuild and restructure the Middle East and North Africa. Governments must also demonstrate that they realise that business is good for peace. They must do so quickly if they wish to compete with other regions of the world. To achieve this, governments must ensure political stability and create an environment conducive to business in which foreign investors feel both welcome and secure. This requires seemingly simple demands, which in practice could involve radical change. It requires from governments enlightened leadership and vision.

Politically, Middle Eastern and North African governments must:

- Project themselves as a cohesive unit eager to com-

pete with other emerging markets of the world;

- Eliminate all restrictions on trade;

- Develop regional networks backed by legally binding international guarantees in areas such as petroleum pipelines, electricity generation and distribution, telecommunications, tourism and water;

- Foster broad acceptance of a free-market mentality, which views profit-making as a virtue;
- Nurture domestic investment as a key to economic development and;
- Allow for the free flow of financial information.

In addition, multilateral as well as national financial institutions should attach priority to the Middle East and North Africa. They also should create mechanisms to shield business from political risk.

To attract foreign investment, governments and the private sector should be encouraged to cooperate in ensuring principles of good government and the rule of law. They can do so by:

- Enforcing universally sound and fair business ethics and practices;
- Streamlining government to become cost efficient and customer oriented;
- Adopting transparency and accountability as the guiding principles of their operations;
- Creating mechanisms for resolving commercial disputes;

(Continued on page 8)



QATARI-ISRAELI TALKS: Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and his Qatari counterpart Sheikh Hamad Ben Jasssem Al Thani share a joke at their meeting in Amman on Tuesday (see page one) (Reuters photo)

UAE to finance housing, services for Muslims and Christians in Jerusalem

ABU DHABI (R) — Vowing to strengthen the Arab character of Jerusalem, the United Arab Emirates president on Tuesday pledged to finance housing projects and meet the medical and social needs of the city's Muslims and Christians.

Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan promised to finance several new housing projects, renovate old buildings, and meet educational, social, and medical needs in Arab East Jerusalem.

The pledge was announced by Sheikh Abdullah Ben Zayed Al Nahayan, deputy minister of information and culture and the president's son, to mark the start of a week-long conference and festival on Jerusalem.

"At this critical moment, it is incumbent upon all who believe in the unique and dear status of Jerusalem to rally all their efforts and capabilities in order to actively confront the illegal measures taken, and still being undertaken, by the Israeli authorities," he told a large audience.

Sheikh Abdullah said that pledge was prompted by "difficult housing conditions suffered by the Muslim and

Christian inhabitants of Jerusalem in view of the existence of licensed housing projects which need financing."

Sheikh Abdullah did not say who issued the licences, and it was not clear whether the Israelis, who control the whole city and claim it as their capital, had agreed in advance to such financing.

A UAE official refused to disclose how much money the Gulf state would pump into Jerusalem's Arab Muslim and Christian population centres, located in the Israeli-occupied east.

"There are housing projects that have been authorised but need funds. He (Sheikh Zayed) has decided to respond to the calls from the steadfast people of Jerusalem to finance a number of housing projects that will be named after Sheikh Zayed," Sheikh Abdullah said.

"He has also decided to finance projects to rehabilitate some facilities in the city and ordered the Red Crescent and the Sheikh Zayed Charity Organisation to meet all medical, educational and social needs of the Jerusalem residents."

Sheikh Abdullah did not elaborate on the projects but

official sources said they involved large funds. "We do not want to mention costs to undercut any Israeli attempt to block the projects," one source said.

Muslim and Christian leaders from the Arab World joined forces for the Jerusalem Festival in the UAE including fund-raising campaigns, lectures, cultural events and exhibitions.

Among them were Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid, Pope Shenouda of the Coptic Church in Egypt, former Jerusalem Archbishop Hilarion Capucci, and Egypt's grand mufti, Mohammed Sayed Attia Tantawi.

Faisal Hussein, in charge of the Jerusalem file for the Palestinians, the city's mufti Akram Sabri, Palestinian Culture Minister Intissar Al Wazir, and former Palestinian peace spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi were also at the opening.

The initiative from Sheikh Zayed, a key financial backer of the Palestinians, was launched a week after the U.S. Congress voted to move the American embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

The vote triggered anger in the Arab World which has

warned it could harm the peace process in the Middle East. U.S. President Bill Clinton, however, has drawn praise for vowing to block the move.

"The U.S. Congress decision constitutes a flagrant bias for Israel and threatens to scuttle the entire peace process," Sheikh Abdullah said.

Mr. Hussein drew long applause when he pledged the Palestinians would win back East Jerusalem.

"In the beginning, we had believed we could liberate Jerusalem through military force. We were wrong," he said.

"Israel is trying its best to control Jerusalem by isolating the Palestinian people from the city and from their own institutions inside the city and imposing new realities on the ground," said Mr. Hussein.

"But we will carry on with the confrontation through the available means and through your support... We can promise resistance, steadfastness... and victory," he said.

The UAE festival for Jerusalem follows Israel's celebration of the city's 3,000th anniversary.

Balabagan appeals for mercy from Sheikh Zayed

DUBAI (R) — Filipina maid Sarah Balabagan on Tuesday appealed from a United Arab Emirates jail for mercy from a sentence of 100 lashes over the killing of her employer.

She told her father Karim by telephone she was asking for help from UAE President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan.

"She is calling on him to pardon her from the 100 lashes and the one year in prison. She was sad on the phone. She wants immediate deportation so she can go home," Karim told Reuters from the Oasis town of Al Ain where his daughter is jailed.

"We are very happy she will not be executed. We won't appeal in the federal court but we appeal to Sheikh Zayed to pardon Sarah," said the Filipino labourer.

A court on Monday also sentenced Ms. Balabagan to a year in jail and deportation for killing her employer, Almas Mohammad Al Bloushi. She said she acted in self-defence as he raped her.

There was outrage from Manila to Paris to Washington after the verdict by an Islamic court in Al Ain.

She agreed to pay the victim's family 150,000 dirhams (\$41,000) blood money — a condition for their dropping their insistence on an earlier death sentence being carried out.

"It's over," a UAE government official sighed after the third verdict against her in four months was announced.

His sense of relief was almost palpable. This federation of seven sheikhdoms on the shores of the Arabian peninsula found the glare of world publicity over the case an unwelcome experience.

Ms. Balabagan was first sentenced to seven years in jail and then condemned to death at a retrial.

The conservative emirates, where 21,000 Filipina maids like Ms. Balabagan work and where three out of four people are foreigners, traditionally like to keep a low

profile.

Ms. Balabagan is said by Manila to be 16 but the UAE says her passport shows her to be 28.

She admitted stabbing 70-year-old Bloushi 34 times last year in what appeared from photographs of the blood-encrusted corpse to be a frenzied attack.

In Manila, people were shocked at news of the lashing. Filipina activist leader Nelia Sancho said whipping was a "very cruel" punishment that robbed women of dignity.

In Paris, the French foreign ministry asked the UAE to spare the maid, calling the caning "so contrary to our own customs."

Former French Prime Minister Laurent Fabius said: "The punishment... can only disgust those who believe in justice. You do not lash a woman. You do not lash a child."

And in Washington, Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney expressed outrage

to Sheikh Zayed and urged him to "act immediately to assure that Ms. Balabagan will not continue to be a victim of violent crime — especially at the hands of your government."

"Ms. Balabagan was a victim of rape and violence at the hands of her employer, and now she could be revictimised by your justice system. The brutality of this most recent reported decision cannot and will not be ignored," she said in a letter to the UAE leader.

The outcry seemed unlikely to be stilled by assurances that the maid would receive only symbolic, painless lashes.

"The intervals of the lashes will depend on how much she can bear," said Al Ain court Judge Sheikh Bi'a Ben Salqi.

A doctor and court expert on lashing would attend the punishment to be administered by a policewoman wielding a thin cane with a book tucked under her arm to limit the force.

NEWS IN BRIEF

King Hassan released from hospital

RABAT (AFP) — King Hassan II of Morocco was released Monday from the New York hospital where he underwent treatment for bronchial pneumonia, the royal palace said. In a statement broadcast over state-run radio, it said the 66-year-old monarch had returned to the New York residence where he had arrived on Oct. 18 to attend ceremonies marking the 50th anniversary of the United Nations. Doctors advised the king to rest for a few days before returning to Morocco, the statement added. King Hassan was admitted to Cornell Medical Centre of New York hospital last Wednesday. The Moroccan consulate in New York said he had caught bronchial pneumonia because of the air conditioning at the United Nations. At the U.N. ceremonies, the king was represented by his son Prince Sidi Mohammed.

Arafat wants other children, no retirement

CAIRO (AP) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat would like to father more children "when there is a chance" and would prefer that his new-born daughter Zahwa looked like her mother instead of him, he told the daily Al Sharq Al Awsat. As for his possible retirement from politics, he said he did not know what the word "retirement" meant. "I cannot imagine I will retire ever," the paper quoted him as saying in Monday's edition. "If I retired from my position I will seek another," Mr. Arafat added, without giving details of what job he would want. Mr. Arafat, 66, has chaired the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) since 1968. He also heads the Palestinian National Authority that runs the autonomy zones in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. His job, he said, does not leave any free time. Mr. Arafat's wife, Suha, has complained that he hardly spent any time with baby Zahwa. "She is pretty and looks like me," Mr. Arafat said of his daughter, born July 24 in France. "I would prefer it if she looked like her mother."

Mubarak names new armed forces chief-of-staff

CAIRO (AFP) — President Hosni Mubarak has named the head of the Republican Guard, which serves as his personal bodyguard, as armed forces chief-of-staff, the official news agency MENA reported. Lieutenant-General Magdi Hataata replaced Lt. Gen. Salah Halabi, who was appointed head of the military's industrial sector, it said. Gen. Hataata was promoted to lieutenant general after the performance of his guards in the failed assassination bid on Mr. Mubarak's life in Addis Ababa in June. Mr. Mubarak's bodyguards shot dead two of the gunmen who ambushed his motorcade in the Ethiopian capital and the president escaped unscathed. The underground Gama Islamiyah claimed the attack. Gen. Halabi was chief-of-staff since May 1991 and led Egyptian forces in the Gulf war which evicted Iraqi troops from Kuwait in February of the same year.

Libya refuses to pay dues for Arab League

CAIRO (AFP) — Libya notified the Arab League on Monday that it would not pay the \$2 million remaining from its contribution for 1995, a league official said. Libya, which owes a total of \$20.5 million to the league in back contributions as well, told the secretariat it "refused to pay the remainder of its dues for 1995." Tripoli, whose economy has been hit by three years of U.N. sanctions over the Lockerbie plane bombing, has paid just over a million of its \$3.32 million dues to the league, the official said. He did not give a reason for Libya's refusal. Member states still have not paid the league more than \$10 million owed for the 1995 budget of \$27.6 million, leaving the 22-member organisation unable to pay its employees for the rest of the year.

Bahraini dissidents to end hunger-strike

NICOSIA (R) — Seven Bahraini opposition leaders have said they would halt their hunger-strike on Wednesday, ten days after they intensified a protest against the government. In a statement sent to international news organisations late on Monday, they said: "Hunger-strikers at Sheikh Abdul Amir al-Jamri's majlis announce they will end their strike on Wednesday night." They said they would then issue a statement. Sheikh Jamri, an influential Shiite Muslim cleric and former member of parliament, and six leading supporters began their hunger-strike on Oct. 23 in protest at what they said was the government's failure to stick to an agreement to end unrest in the country. They are demanding the release of all remaining detainees held since outbreaks of violence nearly a year ago, a halt to trials of detainees, the return of deported protesters, and the start of a dialogue on such issues as restoration of parliament dissolved in 1975.

Israel to sell Sri Lanka warplanes

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel is to sell Sri Lanka fighter planes and patrol boats, Haaretz newspaper reported Tuesday. The Kfir planes, built by Israeli Aircraft Industries with U.S. engines, are no longer in service with the Israeli air force. The Dvora patrol boats, which are still used by the navy, will replace similar boats sunk by Tamil rebels. The newspaper, quoting "foreign sources," said the deal was approved by the U.S. State Department during a visit to Washington by the director general of the defence ministry, David Ivry. The price and form of payment are still to be negotiated, said the daily, which did not give the number of planes and boats involved. Colombo called for military assistance from Israel last April after the resumption of fighting with the Tamil rebels. The request was transmitted via the Sri Lankan embassy in the United States, Haaretz said.

Court delays ruling on 'heretic' professor

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt's supreme court on Monday heard the start of an appeal from a university professor ruled a "heretic" by a lower court and ordered to divorce his wife, the news agency MENA reported. It said the court adjourned the appeal from Nasser Hamed Abu Zaid until Dec. 5. In June, a lower appeals court ruled that Abu Zaid was an apostate from Islam and must be divorced from his wife on the grounds that a Muslim cannot be married to a heretic. The supreme court already ruled in September that it could not order a suspension of the sentence, as sought by Abu Zaid, because the divorce had not been forcibly carried out. The Cairo University professor was not in court on Monday as he is currently in Europe.

Lebanese-Canadian jailed for possession of arms

BEIRUT (AP) — A military tribunal Monday jailed a Canadian man to one month in jail for illegal possession of arms. Mohammad Al Kadri, a naturalised Canadian of Lebanese origin, told the court he wanted to take the weapons — a pistol, ammunition, a bayonet, a cleaver and a kitchen knife — to Toronto as souvenirs. Mr. Kadri, 23, was arrested last Tuesday at Beirut airport when security officials found the arms in baggage slated for check-in. He was about to board a Middle East Airlines flight to London, where he was planning to take an Air Canada flight to Toronto, where he lives. "I was taking souvenirs," Mr. Kadri told the five-officer tribunal, headed by Abdul Hamid Kharabati. "There was no criminal intent." Cases involving weapons are tried before military tribunals in Lebanon. Mr. Kadri would be allowed to return to Canada after serving his sentence but without his "souvenirs," which have been confiscated by the court.

Students protest Cairo interference

CAIRO (AP) — Hundreds of students gathered at three universities Tuesday to protest government interference in student elections and the trial of Islamic activists in a military court. There were no arrests or clashes with security forces, police said, and nearly all the students stayed within the campuses. At least 500 students turned out for a brief demonstration at Al Azhar University, protesting the government's reported decision to bar students from running in campus elections. They also condemned the arrest of two university professors and the decision to put 82 Islamic activists on military trial outside Cairo. Four trucks carrying police with batons and shields were parked outside the campus. Police said there were no arrests, but witnesses saw at least five protesters put in police cars. Hundreds of students also gathered at Cairo University and Ain Shams University, but were mostly confined to the campuses.

Egypt to replace Libya in Security Council

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — After intense U.S. pressure, Egypt will replace Libya as the Arab candidate for a seat in the powerful U.N. Security Council, diplomats said Monday. Egypt was endorsed by Arab states on Friday and is virtually guaranteed a seat when the General Assembly votes on Nov. 8 for five rotating members of the council, which is responsible to peacekeeping. "I don't expect any problems," said Egyptian Ambassador Nabil Al Araby. Mr. Araby said Libya agreed to swap its seat with Egypt after the United States amassed a majority of the General Assembly to block Libya's candidacy. Under a rotating system Libya was slated to replace another Arab country, Oman, pending approval by the General Assembly.

Lebanese opposition daily folds

BEIRUT (AP) — The opposition Al Amal daily, mouthpiece of the right-wing Maronite Catholic Falange party, has folded because of financial problems. The last edition appeared on the newspapers Tuesday. In a front-page editorial, the newspaper said it has "done the impossible... to be independent from the forces of money and manipulation, and from people in power. Al Amal is not prepared to sell its political and informative independence to remain offered and sold in the market." Al Amal was the official publication of the Falange, which led the Christian camp during most of the 1975-90 civil war. But the party's influence has waned in recent years due to internal feuding, financial problems and loss of political dominance by Christians as part of an agreement Muslims to end the war. The Falange still owns the Voice of Lebanon, a major news and entertainment radio station.

Suspect in bank robbery in Lebanese jail

BEIRUT (AP) — A suspect in one of Germany's most cunning bank robberies has been arrested in Beirut on tip-off from Interpol, officials said Tuesday. Prosecutor Fawzi Abu Murad has filed a complaint against Ali Shafiq Ibrahim for robbery of a Commerzbank branch in a prosperous residential neighbourhood of West Berlin June 27. Judicial documents identified Ibrahim, who returned to Beirut on a fake Polish passport two months ago, as a resident who has not yet received Lebanese citizenship. After his interrogation has been completed, he was expected to be charged with theft and using forged documents. Theft carries a prison sentence with hard labour of seven to 15 years, forgery three to 10 years with hard labour. Judicial sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Ibrahim was tracked down by police after a tip from German police was passed to Beirut through the Interpol, the Paris-based International Police Organisation.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO	
14:00	Madeline
14:30	Ghost Writers
15:00	Tomorrow's World
15:30	Amazing Stories
16:00	I Love Lucy
16:30	Tarzan
17:00	Children's Programme — Cocotte
17:30	Minute
18:00	Jeux
19:15	Magazine — Sports Et Musique
19:30	News Headlines
19:35	Anything for a Laugh
20:00	Doc. — Amazing Races
20:30	The Bold and the Beautiful
21:15	Star Trek
22:00	News in English
22:25	Prism
22:45	Drama — Law and Order
23:45	Doc. — Silk Road
01:50	Second Thoughts

PRAYER TIMES

04:29	Fajr
07:47	(Sunrise) Dhuha
11:19	Dhuhr
14:23	'Asr
16:51	Maghreb
18:49	Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church	Sweetish, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel.	62785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590	Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757	Terrace Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541	Anglican Church Tel. 630851
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331	Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
Armenian International Church Tel. 625326	Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691	The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.	
Clouds are expected to build up with a chance of scattered showers in the afternoon with winds southeasterly moderate to swift. In Amman, scattered showers are expected with winds northerly moderate and seas calm.	
Min./Max. temp.	Amman 12/23

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Aqaba	10 / 25
Deserts	17 / 20
Jordan Valley	18 / 27

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 25 Aqaba 27 Humidity readings: Amman 32 per cent. Aqaba 48 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

AMMAN:	
Dr. Nidal Al As'ad	751672
Dr. Yousef Al Faqih	700194
Dr. Mazen Nhalil	830435
Dr. Abdul Rahim Mustafa	744685
Firas pharmacy	661912
Ferdows pharmacy	778336
Al Asma pharmacy	637055
Nairokh pharmacy	623672
Al Salem pharmacy	636730
Yacoub pharmacy	644945
Shmoisani pharmacy	637660
Nairokh pharmacy	623672
Naib pharmacy	547632

Rana Hussein, Times reporter, wins MEDNEWS prize

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A feature report on crimes of honour by a Jordan Times reporter was awarded first prize in the 1995 MEDNEWS prize awards which took place in Alexandria on Oct. 28.

The report, entitled "Murder in the Name of Honour," was written by Rana Hussein, who writes on crime in Jordan for this newspaper.

The report was an analysis of honour killings, with highlights from three major cases of such crimes which occurred in Jordan between mid-1993 and mid-1994.

The report was supported by statistical data and interviews with several sources: sociologists, an academic, a lawyer and civil rights activist, a public security official, the chief Islamic justice, a former minister, and in one case the murderer himself.

Ms. Hussein's report was written and published in the Jordan Times in 1994.

The 28-year-old Ms. Hussein has been writing on crime since obtaining her masters degree from Oklahoma City University in the U.S. in 1993.

According to Ms. Hussein, she was motivated to



Rana Hussein

write the feature because of her own horror at an event which took place in May 1994 involving a 16-year-old girl who was murdered by her older brother after her younger brother raped her.

"It was the most shocking incident for me," she said. "I can't tell you how it affected me."

Encouraged by her editors, Ms. Hussein decided to write a full feature report on crimes of honour.

"The report won, I think, because the issue is so taboo, so sensitive," said Ms. Hussein.

"I consider this prize a victory for all Arab women

and for the victims, and my greatest hope is that such articles will one day effect the necessary changes in our society so that some day soon we will not be reading about such horrific behaviour."

The MEDNEWS prize is designed to encourage young journalists (under 35 years of age) from North Africa and the Middle East region and is a project of the European Union's MED-MEDIA programme.

Ms. Hussein was short-listed last week along with two Egyptian journalists. Her article was selected from 50 nominations written on a variety of issues.

TCC, Siemens sign JD 25m contract to install local line plant networks

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) Tuesday signed a JD 25 million contract with Siemens, the German electronic firm, and partners for the supply, installation and commissioning of local line plant networks with the capacity of 300,000 subscriber lines, according to a statement by Siemens.

Under the agreement, signed by TCC Director General Walid Dweik and Director of International Sales at Siemens Franz Schmidt, Siemens will supply all the required materials and execute the civil and electric works, install the distribution networks and link the old and the new telephone networks.

The TCC will supply the cables and the telephone posts.

The project will be carried out over a period of 36 months, according to the terms of the agreement.

On Oct. 13 Siemens signed a JD 26 million contract with the TCC to install modern digital telephone exchanges in several regions of Jordan.

The TCC said at the time that the 22 exchanges will create a total of 298 circuits serving several regions.

Minister of Post and Communications Jamal Saraireh, who attended the signing ceremony Tuesday, said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that under the terms of the new agreement Siemens has contracted two local firms, the Construction Contracting Company and the Kana'an and Boshah contracting firm, as sub-contractors to help carry out the project.

Mr. Saraireh said the project will be financed through a loan provided by Jordan by the European Investment Bank.

The signing ceremony was attended by German Ambassador to Jordan Heinrich Reiners and Prof. Hans Guenter Danielmayer, member of the managing board of Siemens AG.

Chargé d'Affaires Michael Bock and several senior officials of the TCC and the Ministry of Post and Communications.

Mr. Saraireh was last month quoted as saying



Telecommunications Corporation Director General Walid Dweik and Siemens Director of International Sales Franz Schmidt sign a JD 25 million contract to install local line plant networks in the Kingdom (Petra photo)

that Jordan plans to modernise its telecommunications sector by the end of 2008 with an estimated

value of \$1.067 billion.

The project aims at modernising the telecommunications network and linking

the country with the networks of neighbouring countries.

Jordan, Morocco sign agreement to form joint business council

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordanian Businessmen's Association (JBA) Tuesday signed an agreement for the establishment of a Jordanian-Moroccan Business Council to organise relations between the private sectors in the two countries.

A JBA statement said the agreement was signed by JBA Chairman Hamdi Tabba'a and the chairman of the Moroccan Economic Organisations Federation, Abdul Rahim Lahjuji.

The Moroccan federation is currently taking part in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit.

Also Tuesday the JBA signed an agreement on the establishment of a joint business council with Indonesia during a reception held by the JBA in honour of the Indonesian Minister of Investments.

The agreement was signed by Mr. Tabba'a and Mr. Ruskanda Furkin, chairman of the private sector association in Indonesia,

who is also here to attend the MENA meetings.

The two agreements raised to 12 the number of joint councils formed by the JBA and other Arab and foreign countries in Europe, Asia and Africa as well as Canada, according to the statement.

These countries are: Egypt, Morocco, Syria, Palestine, Spain, the United Kingdom, France, Romania, Malaysia, Turkey, Indonesia and Canada.

Following the signing of the agreement with Morocco, the Moroccan Minister of Privatisation, Abdul Rahman Saeedi, told a press conference that 114 institutions in Morocco were this year privatised.

He said the Moroccan government soon plans to submit a bill to parliament proposing the privatisation of the communications sector in the country, among other government-controlled businesses.



President of the Jordanian Businessmen's Association Hamdi Tabba'a (centre left) and Chairman of the Moroccan Economic Organisations Federation Abdul Rahim Lahjuji (centre right) meet with other JBA members to discuss the establishment of a Jordanian-Moroccan business council (photo by Shahruri)

Official blames world community for failing to continue to fund UNRWA's services to refugees

NEW YORK (Petra) — Jordan's representative to the United Nations General Assembly Fourth Committee Fuad Bataineh Tuesday blamed the international community for failing to provide the necessary funds to enable the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees

(UNRWA) to continue to provide its services to the Palestinian refugees.

In an address before the UN special political committee, Mr. Bataineh said the shortfall in the UNRWA budget places additional financial burdens on the Jordanian treasury, noting that Jordan provides annu-

ally \$250 million worth of services to the Palestinian refugees, because of UNRWA's failure to meet the refugees' needs.

Mr. Bataineh stressed that Jordan bore the brunt of the plight of the Palestinian people since 1948, saying that it placed financial, economic and social burdens on the Kingdom and put pressure on its infrastructure.

Despite the fact that Jordan hosts 40 per cent of the Palestinian refugees, UNRWA allocates only 20

per cent of its budget to the agency's Jordan field office, with the Kingdom covering the difference.

Mr. Bataineh warned of any cuts in UNRWA services to the refugees, saying that any reductions or curtailment will shake the base of the peace process, because such cuts will mean more suffering and further deterioration of the economic and social conditions of Palestinian refugees.

Mr. Bataineh said Jordan deals with the Palestinian

question as an inseparable question and views the refugees as a complete whole regardless of their whereabouts.

He emphasised the need to address the Palestinian question in light of international legitimacy and UN resolutions.

He stressed the need for UNRWA services until a final solution to the Palestine refugee problem is reached, as part of a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the Middle East conflict.



Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres Tuesday takes a few puffs from an argileh on the streets of Amman (photo by Yousef Al 'Allan)

WHAT'S GOING ON

FUND-RAISING FOR EXCAVATION

* Fund-raising event to finance the excavation project in Wadi Faynan, organised by the British Institute at Amman for Archaeology and History, at the British Embassy Club on Friday (noon - 4:00 p.m.) (Tel. 841317)

DIALOGUE AND LECTURE

* Dialogue with historian Rox Al 'Uzaizi at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman, at 6:00 p.m.

* "The Dome of the Rock," by Dr. Beatrice St. Laurent at the Friends of Archaeology Centre at 6:00 p.m.

FILM

"Last Emperor," at the British Council at 7:00 p.m.

BANI HAMIDA FALL EXHIBITION

* The Bani Hamida Women's Weaving Project presents "Winds of Change" its fall exhibition at the Jerusalem Insurance Company in Shmeisani (Tel. 658696)

EXHIBITIONS

* Metal works by Ammar Khamash at Liwan, off Wadi Saqra Street. Also displaying all kinds of handicrafts. (Tel. 699141)

* Paintings by Salam Kanaan and ceramics by Najwa Annab and Margaret Tadros at Alia Art Gallery.

* Paintings by Iraqi artists Nazem Hamed at Orfali Gallery.

* Paintings by Iraqi artist Saleh Jumai'i at Ab'ad Gallery.

* Paintings by Shakir Hassan Al-Said at the French Cultural Centre.

* A Retrospective Exhibition of sculptures and drawings by Mona Saudi at Darat Al Fumun.

Under the Patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor

Bani Hamida 10th Anniversary "Winds of Change"

Enjoy the Bani Hamida Women fine achieved works

• rugs • cushions • runners • wallhangings

Annual Fall Exhibition

26 October - 5 November

10:00 am - 9:00 pm

Sponsorship & Location:

Jerusalem Insurance Company

Shmeisani - Abdul Hamid Sharaf St.

Opposite Air France Tel. 658696

In cooperation with:

Banour & Shawa Gallery

Crystal

Excellence

Greenhouse Jordan

Modern House

Noor Engineering

Span Marketing (Sanderson)

Tamil Tiger rebels panic as Sri Lankan troops approach Jaffna

COLOMBO (R) — Tamil Tiger guerrillas and civilians were fleeing the rebel headquarters of Jaffna Tuesday as Sri Lanka's armed forces approached to within a few miles of the northern town, relief workers and the military said.

A western diplomat charting the advance said one flank of the military assault was within 5-1/2 kilometres of Jaffna town, the strategic and spiritual capital of the rebels would be homeland.

"The LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) are moving out of Jaffna town," a senior U.N. source told Reuters.

"The roads (out of Jaffna) are full, jam-packed" with vehicles heading east for Chavakachcheri, on the north side of the Jaffna lagoon, he said, citing reports from the northern rebel-held peninsula.

Relief workers said Tiger radio had made urgent broadcasts telling the people to evacuate as quickly as possible and the people were responding, taking

whatever they could with them.

Fleeing residents said the LTTE had declared a state of emergency. "The word panic is being used to describe what is happening," a relief worker said.

Jaffna residents travelling to the south said more than 5,000 refugees crossed Jaffna lagoon south to Kilinochchi in heavy rain Monday night free of the usual charges paid to the LTTE. There were 11,000 refugees there in total, they said.

The Tiger radio broadcast contradicted a military statement Monday that the LTTE intended to restrict the movement of civilians so they could be armed to fight the advancing troops, the worker said.

The armed forces, two weeks into their biggest offensive against the Tigers in 12 years of war that have taken more than 50,000 lives, said they were involved in clashes just a few miles from Jaffna town. A senior Sri Lankan gov-

ernment official said Monday that troops should wrest control of Jaffna within a week.

Kusumsiri Balapatabendi, secretary to President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, told Reuters in Madras, India, that troops were about five kilometres from the town.

The military said it had taken Neerveli Junction, near the Uppu Aru lagoon 10 kilometres northeast of Jaffna town centre, "Forcing the terrorists to withdraw further southwards carrying their dead and wounded".

It said it had also captured the main base of the LTTE air wing there, with underground concrete structures, lecture halls, classrooms and housing.

Parts of an Avro air force transport plane shot down in April were also found nearby.

In a communique, the military said artillery fire caused "very heavy (LTTE) casualties". Air attacks on Urumpirai and Kopai areas,

south and southwest of Neerveli, killed more than 100 and wounded more than 200, according to estimates, it said.

The armed forces Monday suffered 10 soldiers killed and 40 wounded in the advance, the military said. "Ground troops have confirmed 102 terrorists were killed and over 150 severely injured," spokesman Major Tar Dunuwille said, adding that the LTTE appeared to be in "total disarray".

The LTTE said on their radio they had killed more than 100 soldiers at Neerveli for the loss of 30 of their own. They had recovered 14 soldiers' bodies.

At least three army divisions of more than 21,000 men backed by tanks, artillery and air cover have been pushing south from their Palaly Air Base towards Jaffna town since Operation Riviresa began on Oct. 17.



LIFE ON BOARD THE SHUTTLE: Space shuttle Columbia mission specialist Michael Lopez-Alegria (right) videotapes fellow mission specialist Catherine Coleman (left) as she works in the U.S. Microgravity Laboratory aboard the shuttle. Columbia and her seven-person crew are on a 16-day scientific mission (AFP photo)

Mayhew says Northern Irish prisoners may be freed in weeks

LONDON (R) — More than 90 people serving prison sentences in Northern Ireland for guerrilla offences could be released by Christmas under a bill presented to the British parliament Monday, a minister said.

Northern Ireland Secretary Sir Patrick Mayhew told parliament that if it approved the bill, which would increase the maximum rate of remission for good behaviour while in jail, he would ensure many offenders left jail within weeks.

Sir Patrick said the measure was a recognition of transformed security in the British-ruled province since Catholic and Protestant guerrilla groups declared ceasefires more than a year ago.

"The risk of further terrorist related offences being committed by those offenders whom the bill affects is seen to be greatly reduced," Sir Patrick told the House of

Commons. Asked by an MP when the bill would take effect, Sir Patrick said: "It will be the intention of the government to bring this act into force, if it receives the approval of the House, as soon as practicable, and in time for Christmas of this year."

The bill reverses a decision taken in 1989, at the height of guerrilla violence in the province, to cut the maximum rate of remission of a prison sentence to one third from one half.

Sir Patrick said if it began to operate in early December, more than 90 of the 471 prisoners to whom it applied would leave prison in time for Christmas, and a further 98 would be released early in 1996.

However, rejecting the idea that the bill amounted to an amnesty, he added: "Many of those who have been sentenced for the most heinous offences would still remain in

prison until at least the end of the first decade of the next century."

Sir Patrick said the government was not recognising Irish Republican Army claims that those serving sentences for guerrilla attacks were prisoners of war.

"It makes no concessions to those who falsely claim that those who are convicted of terrorist offences somehow become political prisoners. It makes no concession to terrorism at all," he said.

"The bill will enable the penal system in Northern Ireland to make a positive, but proportionate and prudent, response to the continuation of the ceasefires and to the welcome reduction in risk which has been brought about over the past year."

The bill, which is supported by the main opposition parties, is expected to pass through parliament within the next 10 days.

Recording with late Lennon 'spooky'

LONDON (R) — Paul McCartney confessed it was "spooky and very wonderful" to reunite with the Beatles to record with John Lennon 15 years after he was shot dead. The three surviving Beatles came together to record Free As A Bird and Real Love that Lennon sang on tape just before his death in New York at the hands of a lone gunman in 1980.

McCartney, recalling the recording with George Harrison and Ringo Starr, told Today newspaper: "It was strange and very magic. It was spooky and very wonderful. George played some great guitar on those tracks and we created some beautiful harmonies. So much so that when Ringo heard the playback after we had finished, he said: 'God it sounds like the Beatles.' The singles are due to be released next month as part of a 150-track Beatles anthology of previously unheard material. The three have also made a television documentary telling the story in their own words.

Stolen \$5 million Goya recovered in Argentina

BUENOS AIRES (R) — Argentine police have recovered a stolen Goya portrait valued at up to \$5 million, authorities said.

The Portrait of Dona Maria Teresa Ruiz De Apodaca Y Sesma, painted by the Spanish master Francisco De Goya in 1790, was stolen from a provincial museum 12 years ago along with other valuable art pieces. The approximately three feet by four feet (one metre by 1.2 metre) canvas was recovered by police from a pickup truck after a chase through the posh Buenos Aires neighbourhood of Belgrano. Police arrested the van's 46-year-old driver, whom they said headed a gang of bank robbers.

Naked mayor hopes to be showered with votes

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — San Francisco Mayor Frank Jordan defended his decision to jump into the shower naked with two radio disc jockeys, a move some saw as a bizarre blunder that could hurt his re-election hopes in 10 days.

The normally-staid 60-year-old agreed to shower with KRQR Radio talk show hosts Mark Thompson and Brian Phelps, who arrived at the mayor's home and said he could win extra votes. The three then stood in the shower singing Frank Sinatra's My Way on the live radio show. "People have to know that I have another side too, that I'm not just totally low-key or too serious..." Mr. Jordan said.

Flying dwarf appeals against French grounding

PARIS (R) — Diminutive Manuel Wackenheim wants the European Court of Human Rights to take action against France for banning the bizarre pastime of "dwarf-throwing". The 1.14 metre Frenchman is furious he has now lost the income he once derived from being hurled around by burly men. The State Council, France's highest administrative court, ruled last week that dwarf throwing was degrading to human dignity. Despite complaints by 28-year-old Wackenheim, the council upheld bans on the pastime by some local councils.

Azeris play down bomb theory on disaster

BAKU (AFP) — The Azerbaijani government played down Tuesday reports that a bomb was responsible for the Baku underground train disaster that killed around 300 people, the worst such incident in history.

State Security Minister Namig Abbasov discounted the bomb theory in Saturday's horrific events, saying victims did not have the wounds caused by explosions.

"If there had been an explosion, then the dead would have had certain wounds, which were not found during the enquiry," he was quoted as saying by Interfax News Agency.

"A spokesman for the prosecutor's office said: 'Sabotage remains just one of the possible versions.'"

Authorities initially blamed the disaster on a fire started by faulty electricals, but a metro investigator said on state television Monday that an explosion ripped the train apart.

For now, the investigation into the disaster is continuing under a criminal negligence statute that covers "violations in the rules of operating transport" but not acts of deliberate sabotage, the prosecutor's office spokesman said.

A harsher statute could be invoked at any time, if investigators determine "officially" that sabotage was the cause, he said.

But Azerbaijani President Geidar Aliyev himself said Monday he "could not discount" the possibility of sabotage.

State television showed Monday the inside of the burnt-out subway cars with holes in the floor beneath the seats.

Tadzhik Akhmedov, head of the metro's tunnel equipment service, said the holes could have been caused only by a powerful explosion because a mere fire would not have produced temperatures hot enough to melt through the iron floor.

The broadcast then showed interviews with several survivors, each of whom claimed to have seen or heard an explosion or explosions.

State television also showed an interview with Health Minister Ali Insanov, who said that most of the victims died from poisonous gas.

Investigators have said that the burning plastic in the subway cars gave off toxic fumes.

A crime expert quoted by Turan News Agency said an ordinary fire could not have caused the catastrophe and he described the fumes that poisoned many of the victims as having foreign military characteristics.

The wagons were twisted by the heat and it takes 1,700 degrees Celsius (3,092 degrees Fahrenheit) to melt the steel, the expert, who would not give his name, said.

The holes in one of the wagons meant that a double layer of floor and a sheet of asbestos had been punctured, he added.

"It can not be the result of a technical malfunction or a fire," he said.

An Azeri journalist in Baku who asked not to be named said that some see the new terrorism theory as an attempt by some authorities to dodge the blame for negligence.

"If it is a terrorist act, that explains everything. Otherwise somebody will have to take the responsibility," the journalist said.

The investigating commission is not scheduled to publish its report for another 10 to 15 days, the prosecutor's office spokesman said.

This means that the report will coincide roughly with parliamentary elections scheduled for Nov. 12.

Two other subway disasters last year in Baku, which together claimed 28 lives, were both blamed on terrorist bombers.

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Mrs. Dole takes leave from Red Cross to campaign for husband

WASHINGTON (AP) — Elizabeth Dole is taking a year's leave as president of the American Red Cross to join her husband's presidential campaign. She said Monday she will reclaim her job even if Sen. Bob Dole is elected president.

That would make the former labour and transportation secretary the first lady to work full time outside the White House.

"I'm leaving now to help my husband. I hope one day to help him as first lady," she said. "But I'll always be a Red Crosser - I'll be back."

The Red Cross Board of Governors Sunday approved a one-year leave of absence for Mrs. Dole to join her husband's campaign for the Republican nomination. The election is a year away.

The unpaid leave from her \$200,000-a-year job takes effect this week. The president's salary is also \$200,000 a year, but first ladies do not collect a salary.

Norm Augustine, national chairman of the Red Cross, told USA Today in a story published Monday there would be no problem with Mrs. Dole resuming her role.

"If a woman were considered for being president, do you think we would be debating whether her husband would have time to continue his career?" Augustine asked.

Mrs. Dole said the two roles are in many ways complementary.

"I believe, both as first lady and president of the Red Cross, I could help the country rekindle its spirit of

volunteerism and philanthropic giving," she said.

Mrs. Dole, who has run the Red Cross for four years, said previously she intended to take a leave to campaign for her husband but had not said publicly whether she intended to return to the Red Cross if he is elected.

"Elizabeth is a source of strength and inspiration for me," Mr. Dole said Monday. "I know she will be a tremendous asset to our campaign, and she would be the kind of first lady who will make America proud."

Mrs. Dole initially will focus her campaign efforts in Iowa and New Hampshire, site of the first two votes in the 1996 Republican presidential campaign.

Burma opium king's peace move gets mixed response

BANGKOK (R) — Burma's embattled opium warlord Khun Sa has received a mixed response to new overtures to open peace negotiations with the military government as the country's cool, dry fighting season begins.

A senior official from Khun Sa's Mong Tai Army (MTA) said Tuesday that Khun Sa began his peace moves in August with a letter to government leader General Than Shwe seeking talks.

"Rangoon received the letter and their response was positive," the official, one of Khun Sa's close aides who declined to be identified, told Reuters.

The aide declined to reveal further details but another MTA source said last week that a regional guerrilla commander had reached a loose, temporary ceasefire with a frontline Burmese army commander in the eastern part of Shan state.

The Burmese military

attache in Bangkok dismissed the guerrillas' claims outright, saying the government would never negotiate with Khun Sa and his guerrilla force.

"Even if we received a letter towards Khun Sa is that our government will never talk with them," Burmese military attaché Colonel Thein Swe told Reuters.

While the Burmese military has negotiated ceasefires with 15 other ethnic minority guerrilla armies since 1989, they dismiss Khun Sa and his Shan guerrilla army as drug bandits.

"They are not like other ethnic groups, they do not have political and ethnic issues, they are narcotics trafficking bandits and even if they surrender they still have to face criminal trial for drug trafficking," Col. Thein Swe said.

"It's impossible for any Burmese soldier to accept a ceasefire overture made by the drug warlord, not even at the regional or local

level," he said.

Mr. Khun Sa says he is fighting for the independence of Shan state and only taxes opium traders passing through his zones of control in the remote north-east of Burma.

Burmese opposition sources, while acknowledging Khun Sa's involvement in the drugs business, say many genuine Shan nationalists have rallied to him as he is commander of the only effective force in Shan state opposing the government.

Mr. Khun Sa has made peace overtures on several occasions in the past and for years other ethnic minority guerrillas suspected he had a secret deal with the Burmese army as he was largely left alone in his remote fiefdom.

But the Burmese military launched its first sustained offensive against Mr. Khun Sa in December 1993 and intermittent fighting has continued since then.

Perry: Rape case must not 'poison' U.S.-Japan ties

TOKYO (R) — U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry Tuesday expressed deep sorrow for the alleged rape of a schoolgirl by three U.S. soldiers on Okinawa, but said it must not "poison" security ties between Tokyo and Washington.

Arriving for talks with Japanese leaders on the crisis, Mr. Perry said the United States would consider any proposals to cut the 26,000 U.S. troops on Okinawa, but insisted that overall American troop strength in Japan must remain at 46,000.

"The key messages that I hope to leave with our Japanese allies is that the U.S.-Japan relationship is an absolute key to security

and stability in Asia and that nobody benefits from that...more than Japan," he told reporters flying with him from Washington.

"While we are deeply sorry for the suffering of the schoolgirl and her family, we cannot let this poison our entire relationship," he said of last month's incident.

"I want to first of all get it in perspective and I want to get it behind us."

Mr. Perry meets Defence Minister Seishiro Eto and Foreign Minister Yohei Kono Wednesday to discuss the storm of protest on Okinawa against the U.S. military presence there.

The three servicemen have been turned over to

Japanese authorities and go on trial on Nov. 7.

Governor Masahide Ota of Okinawa, reacting to the rape case, has vowed not to sign new land-lease contracts required to maintain U.S. bases on the island 1,600 kilometres south of Tokyo unless the American presence there is reduced.

Mr. Perry told reporters the United States was willing to consider that, but "We are not proposing, we are not considering reducing the total number of troops in Japan."

Japanese and U.S. officials are racing to settle the issue by trimming some bases on Okinawa ahead of a scheduled Nov. 20 summit meeting in Japan between

President Bill Clinton and Prime Minister Tomichi Murayama.

U.S. officials travelling with Mr. Perry said privately that any shift of American troops from Okinawa to other areas of Japan could be expensive for Tokyo at a time when military spending is already tight in Japan.

The United States agreed last week to make at least one major change in the so-called status of forces agreement with Japan. In the future it will turn over American servicemen to Japanese authorities for questioning even before they are indicted on such serious crimes as rape and murder.

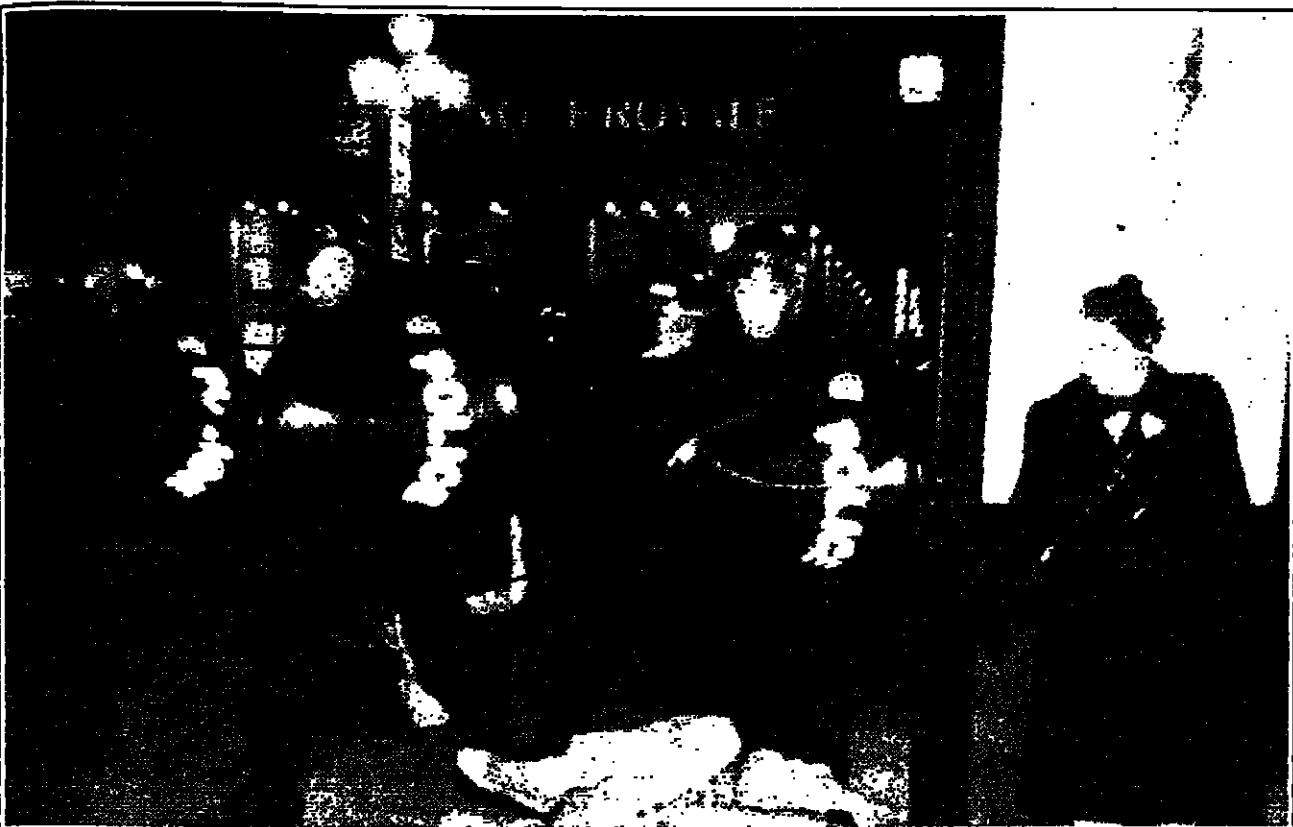
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BLANTYRE — House of representatives Speaker... Monday... Quebec's vote on... independence from Canada... a warning signal to

World News

Jordan Times, Wednesday, November 1, 1995 5



A 'Yes' supporter is knocked over by police during clashes in Montreal. Police clashed with disappointed Quebecers who supported secession from Canada after the results of the referendum was announced (AFP photo)

Gingrich calls Quebec a warning signal for U.S.

ATLANTA (R) — House of Representatives Speaker Newt Gingrich Monday described Quebec's vote on independence from Canada as a "warning signal" to the United States on the dangers of bilingualism.

Mr. Gingrich used Monday's Quebec referendum to repeat his call for Congress to enshrine English as the only official U.S. language — despite growing numbers of people who speak Spanish or Asian languages at home.

"If we don't insist on

renewing our civilisation, starting with insisting on English as a common language, we are just going to devour this country. Watch the Canadian results today," Mr. Gingrich said in a speech to a business forum at the Georgia Institute of Technology.

"It's a serious warning to all Americans that allowing bilingualism to continue to grow is very dangerous and that we should insist on English as a common language and that it's what binds us together," the

Georgia Republican later said to reporters.

"It's very important to take seriously the warning signal from Quebec."

Voters in the French-speaking Canadian province of Quebec began casting their ballots Monday on the question of seceding from the rest of the country, where English is the dominant language.

Conservative U.S. politicians have expressed alarm at the growth of Spanish, particularly in states such as California, Texas and

Florida. The U.S. Census Bureau predicts that Hispanics will account for one in four Americans by the middle of the next century, up from one in 10 today.

Congress is due to vote next year on a piece of legislation known as the English-only bill, which would make English the official U.S. language and prohibit the use of others in legal proceedings and ballots.

Canada steps back from the brink in Quebec vote

MONTREAL (R) — Canada pulled back from the brink of breaking apart Tuesday after the French-speaking province of Quebec voted by the narrowest of margins to stay in the country.

In a nail-biting conclusion to Monday's referendum, biggest threat to Canada's unity in its 128-year history, separatists were defeated by a razor-thin majority, 50.6 per cent to 49.4.

As the rest of the country watched with bated breath, the pro-Canada camp clawed back an early lead by the separatists, only going ahead with nearly 70 per cent of votes counted.

It was the second failed bid for secession by Quebec in 15 years. Separatists were beaten 60 to 40 per cent in 1980.

But after coming tantalisingly close to victory, separatists immediately served notice that they will try again to take the French-speaking province out of Canada.

"We want a country and we will have it," Quebec Premier Jacques Parizeau yelled to a crowd of supporters in Montreal after he conceded defeat.

Political analysts said the narrowness of the result suggested the Quebec issue had not been settled and Canada could be riven by dissension for years.

The unofficial final count put the margin of defeat for the separatists at only 53,000 votes out of 4.7 million cast.

A strong majority of French-speakers, who make up 82 per cent of the Quebec population, voted for independence. But an overwhelming majority of English-speakers and immigrant groups rejected secession.

A bitter Parizeau lashed out at these groups. "We are beaten it is true. But by what? Money and the ethnic vote," he told supporters. "We (French-speakers) voted for 'yes' by a margin of 60 per cent."

Tension ran high on the streets of Montreal after the vote as crowds of angry young separatists and Canadian unity supporters taunted each other and clashed.

Four people, including three police officers, were injured and 50 arrested as police clashed with hundreds of demonstrators, eyewitnesses said.

Separately, in the Montreal suburb of Vaudreuil the electoral district office of Daniel Johnson, leader of the anti-separatist forces in Quebec, was badly damaged by a fire.

Police said they could not directly tie the fire to the referendum result, but they suspected arson. No one was injured in the fire.

The main confrontations between police and demonstrators occurred as hundreds of separatists tried to reach a Montreal nightclub where supporters of Canadian unity celebrated their victory in the referendum.

An eyewitness said that one man seen lying on the ground about four city blocks from the club was taken to hospital by ambulance.

The three police officers were only slightly injured. Some of the demonstrators hurled rocks and bottles at police and made a bonfire out of Canadian unity placards. They also burned a Canadian flag.

In one skirmish, five separatists were dragged away by police bleeding and chanting: "We want a country. Quebec for Quebecers."

Witnesses said the main clashes were between police and separatists but some unity supporters were also involved.

Prime Minister Jean Chretien called on Canadians to close ranks and heal the wounds of the bitter campaign. "The time has come for reconciliation," Mr. Chretien said in a televised speech from the national capital of Ottawa.

Criticised for underestimating the threat from the separatists, Mr. Chretien threw himself into the campaign to save Canada only in the last week. In a desperate bid to save the country, he offered his personal support in the final days before the vote for changes to the Canadian constitution long sought by Quebec to protect its French language and culture.

"Let us work together to bring about the necessary changes. In particular this includes the recognition of the distinct character of Quebec society," Mr. Chretien said in an olive branch to the separatists.

U.S. President Bill Clinton telephoned Mr. Chretien after



A man wipes away tears as the results of the referendum come in at the Yes party headquarters in Montreal (AFP photo)

the vote to express his support for a strong and united Canada. Washington was relieved at the outcome because political chaos north of the border could have hurt the world's biggest trading relationship.

Outside Quebec, Canadians breathed a huge sigh of relief as their country survived the gravest challenge in its 128-year history. They cried for joy, sang the national anthem, "O Canada", and waved the red and white maple leaf flag in celebration.

The Canadian dollar soared two U.S. cents in relief at the narrow victory and Canadian bonds and treasury bills also jumped. Toronto stocks were poised to leap when the market opened Tuesday.

But financial analysts said the closeness of the vote raised troubling questions about the future of the country and the market optimism might not last.

The separatists looked headed for a decisive defeat until only three weeks ago when their charismatic leader Lucien Bouchard began criss-crossing the province making speeches calling for Quebec to take charge of its own destiny.

His message struck a deep vein of emotion among French-speakers, who have been increasingly frustrated by more than a decade of failed negotiations with Canada to rewrite the constitution to settle Quebec's grievances.

Meanwhile France Tuesday reaffirmed its preferential ties with Quebec after separatists in the Francophone province narrowly lost a bid for independence from Canada.

The French Foreign Ministry, calling Quebec an "essential partner" in the Francophone world, said Prime Minister Alain Juppe would visit Quebec in 1996 as part of a regular exchange confirming historic Transatlantic ties.

"France takes note of the result of this consultation," the ministry said in a statement after opponents of independence took 50.6 per cent in Monday's referendum against 49.4 per cent for secession.

"(France) plans quite naturally to confirm and develop its direct and preferential relations which link it to Quebec, an essential partner in the Francophone world," the statement said.

Wife says Yeltsin getting better

MOSCOW (R) — President Boris Yeltsin, rushed to hospital last week with heart problems, is doing better, and his wife Naina Tuesday appealed to journalists not to "breed fear" with their reports on his health.

"I can say with relief that Boris Nikolayevich is doing better," ITAR-TASS news agency quoted Naina Yeltsin as saying.

She added: "Of course we are all worried — the family above all — but I think there is no need to talk about the president's inability to carry out his duties, about the (nuclear) button being out of control as soon as he falls ill."

"This just breeds fear among the people and life is troublesome enough already. Neither the press nor the television need to do this. The president, his family and Russians should be treated with understanding."

She said Mr. Yeltsin had already started working on official documents and was becoming "more active". Mr. Yeltsin's illness,

which sent shock waves through Russia's political scene and unsettled world markets, was his second mild heart attack in less than four months.

On the last occasion the Russian president, 64, was out of action for four weeks — two weeks in hospital and two in a sanatorium.

Mr. Yeltsin fell ill again last week after returning from a hectic trip to France and the United States. He has not been seen in public since his return and no pictures or television footage have been released since he was taken to hospital.

Kremlin aides, who say the stresses of the U.S. trip were a factor behind his illness, insist Yeltsin remains in charge of Russia. But doctors have advised him not to receive visitors.

Interfax News Agency quoted Naina as saying she was determined to ensure that Mr. Yeltsin, who is suffering from an ischaemic condition which disrupts the flow of blood to the heart, completed his course of treatment.

"In July when he had an ischaemic crisis, he did not complete his treatment and went back to work," she said. "Of course he will get more and more active every day, but he has to complete his treatment."

Naina Yeltsin usually keeps a low profile in Russian political life, but she lashed out at the media the last time when Mr. Yeltsin was ill, telling them to stop misreporting the facts.

"He is a human being, so why can't people treat him like one? Suddenly, as president, apparently he has to become a metal robot," she said at the time. "I don't envy the person who takes the president's seat. It is a hard life."

ITAR-TASS said Monday that Mr. Yeltsin would have to stay in hospital for at least three weeks.

But spokesman Sergei Medvedev told Interfax he was not aware of such a decision by doctors. He also doubted Mr. Yeltsin would meet senior officials Tuesday.

S. Korean prosecutors to summon Roh

SEOUL (R) — Disgraced South Korean ex-President Roh Tae-Woo has been summoned to appear before state prosecutors who want to grill him over a \$654 million fortune he secretly amassed, prosecutors said Tuesday.

Mr. Roh was instructed to show up at the prosecutor general's office Wednesday morning, an official said. He would be the first

South Korean president to appear before prosecutors.

No president has faced legal action, but public pressure is mounting on the government to make an example of Mr. Roh.

"The questioning is expected to take a very long time. It will begin at 10 a.m. (0100 GMT) and continue late into the night," Moon Young-Ho, the prosecutor in charge of the case was

quoted by Yonhap News Agency as saying.

"It's inevitable he would be recalled," Mr. Moon said.

Yonhap said prosecutors would question Mr. Roh about when and how the secret fund was raised, who contributed to it, whether money was provided to ruling and opposition politicians, and if there were any funds stashed overseas.

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Success over troubled water

OF ALL the important regional issues dealt with at the Middle East and North Africa (MENA II) economic summit, which concluded successfully last night, water appeared to be the most pressing since it is the lifeline to all economic planning and development both at the national and regional levels. Not surprisingly, the World Bank drew attention to this major problem in the course of the conference when its vice president warned that unless the countries of the Middle East and North Africa paid more attention to solving it, all efforts for regional development would come to naught.

We find the World Bank proposal to convene a Middle East and North Africa summit on water next year a very valuable and timely contribution. There are dire facts which should shock us all into action. Seven out of 16 states in this part of the world are already using 100 per cent of their renewable water resources. Eight use less than 500 cubic metres of water per capita annually, a watershed point below which water use would become dangerously acute. Unless something is done about this side of the problem, within the next 30 years, most of the countries in the two regions would cross this critical point.

Where we take exception to the World Bank ideas is over some of its recommendations for easing the burden especially when it suggests that less water should be diverted for agricultural use. The Bank estimates that 90 per cent of all regional water is being used for agriculture and proposes therefore that agricultural production be curtailed until water can be used more efficiently and priced higher to discourage waste. We can all be supportive of the call for a more efficient use of water by, for example, the deployment of drip irrigation methods and by reasonably hiking its price. But to suggest that the countries concerned should sacrifice their strategic food needs in order to ensure their strategic water needs would be tantamount to solving one problem by creating another.

The World Bank's panacea in this regard rests on the hard economic fact that agriculture consumes a lot of the available water but contributes only 15-20 per cent of the gross domestic product. Yet we all know that efficient farming and the establishment of an agricultural industry, for example, can be just as valuable to gross national product of a country as any other industrial production. Besides, not all countries are endowed with the necessary natural resources or the sophisticated technology to opt for non-agricultural industrial production instead of an agricultural one.

We can think of other ways to deal with the water crisis head-on. Regional understandings and cooperation can lend very important support to the efforts to solve the water aspect of regional development. That is why we have multilateral talks emanating out of the ongoing peace process to resolve the problem. We have not exhausted discussions on these issues yet and many of us are pinning high hopes on them to settle part of the problem, at least. Desalination of sea water is still a viable economic option that cannot be ruled out. Last, but not least, and by its own admission, the Bank says that half of all municipal water was being wasted because of water leakage. This is obviously an area where the Bank and the donor countries can lend valuable support. There are also some water resources that have yet to be tapped. Investment in this field can also be money well spent.

No matter where the answer lies, though, the World Bank was right in raising the issue of water so forcefully and effectively at the summit.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A COLUMNIST in Al Rai's daily demanded that the Jordanian government be more daring in its dealings with the United States and that the Kingdom should enjoy the same benefits offered by Washington to Egypt and Israel for signing their peace treaties. It is true that peace is very beneficial to all parties in the Middle East region but this peace in which Jordan is involved is an American-sponsored peace and the United States ought to offer the parties involved in it something concrete, said Tareq Masarweh who added that although the Kingdom does not aspire to get \$3 billion in annual aid like Israel has been receiving since its conclusion of the peace treaty with Cairo. Nothing should prevent Jordan from announcing that it is not satisfied with what it is getting as dividends of peace and the Kingdom should not be covered into submission to Washington's will, demanded the writer. Referring to an address at the Amman summit by U.S. Secretary of Commerce Ronald Brown urging the private sector to invest in Jordan's projects, the writer said it was doubtful that the private sector would be interested in infrastructure services which is the duty of the state which in turn should be helped by the U.S. administration, financially and technically, to carry out such projects. He said that the United States could at least offer Jordan preferential treatment allowing its goods free access into the American market.

A WRITER in Al Dustour said the Arab League secretary general had uttered eloquent and beautiful words before the Amman economic summit when he called for coordination among Arab countries at the economic and political levels so that the Arab Nation could become strong again and secure the liberation of its occupied lands including Jerusalem. If Dr. Esmat Abdul Maguid wants this to be done it is his duty to take the first step as the league's chief and it is his responsibility to take the initiative in preventing the Arab economies from falling under the hegemony of the Israeli economy, said Taher Al Adwan. Liberating the Arab lands goes hand in hand with liberating the Arab countries' economies, and the Arab League should find the right mechanism to achieve that goal, the writer demanded.

The vertical vs the horizontal:

National security depends on well-being of neighbours

The following statement by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan was made at the dinner party for the participants in the MENA summit hosted by His Royal Highness on Monday evening:

THE ACHIEVEMENTS in the last two days are largely due to the goodwill and generosity of all those who have participated in this gathering, and in building peace and prosperity, it is self-evident that we have to redouble our efforts to make up for lost time. But provided the will is there the effort is less demanding and more rewarding. I know that what lies ahead is a great deal of hard work. But, unlike the previous phase, such hard work is of a very satisfying and rewarding nature. We should not respond to sceptics by attempting or pretending to take easy short cuts, for they do not exist and I think that in building a sound foundation that they should not exist.

The key question is not: "What has been achieved or delivered as a peace dividend during the last year or the last month or the last week or the last two days?" The important question to consider is: "How are changes in the regional map inducing each and every nation, and every people in the MENA area, to reassess its national agenda?"

A meaningful new agenda for the Middle East should include two basic dimensions. Firstly, a redefinition of "national security." And secondly, a nurturing of a "conversation" or dialogue within the region, and between the region and the outside world. In reality these two dimensions are closely linked.

In talking about redefining security, my purpose is not to evoke a theoretical or academic debate. But there is an urgent need for all of us to reassess the relation of security between states (or what has been termed as "vertical security"), and security within states (or "horizontal security"). In the past, many in our region assumed that it was possible to address the first while ignoring the

second. Today, it is becoming abundantly clear that in our small neighbourhood in the Middle East, security between states is significantly dependent on what goes on within states.

Therein lies the point of departure for redefining and broadening the understanding of national security. When I look at the contribution of Merrill Lynch, Standard & Poors and Moody's, and I am described as hopeful, I regard it as a great blessing. When I am described in terms of positive expectation I begin to feel more secure. The prosperity of each nation is ultimately dependent on the well-being of its neighbours — that is the business we are engaged in — the well-being of our peoples and our neighbours. Peace treaties can address "vertical security" or relations between states but it is in the joint effort at peace building among our peoples that is the way of promoting security within each of our societies lies.

Redefining national security has in fact been initiated. We can see Israel taking an active interest in the well-being of Palestinians in Gaza, Nablus, Jenin and Jericho. Similarly, Palestinians are concerned with the security of Israelis within Israel. We are approaching the point when the people of Beirut, Damascus, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Amman and Cairo take an active interest in each other's welfare and prosperity. And if it is not out in the open, surely it is there on the airwaves with all the Internet, with all the telecommunication, I cannot believe effectively that what is happening here today is not being watched further afield. But effective leadership is about filtering such concerns to the grassroots. In the new agenda, Human Resource Development at the regional level has to



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan of Jordan and Mauritanian Prime Minister Mohammad Wadda Bu Bakr (second from right) look on (Petra Press photo)

replace the arms race as a practical means for promoting security. The ultimate objective is the dismantling of barriers to arrive at a zone of shared prosperity.

This takes me to the second pillar of the new agenda: the promotion of a conversation among the different cultures. At the starting point, what I would like to emphasise is the importance of delinking Islam and international terrorism. It goes without saying that we should all oppose terrorism in all its forms and whatever the source. An eminent scholar has aptly said that the issue of terrorism is fraught with many confusions, purveyed by people including academics who see their contribution as preying on the anxieties of others. He added, (and I quote), "there are many terrorists who are not Muslims, and the history of modern political terror, from the Fenians, the Armenian Dashnak, and the opponents of the Czars onwards, suggests that terrorism has a rather more ecumenical origin.... Most acts of terrorism are committed in situations of communal violence."

Acts of violence associated with Muslim immigrants in Europe and elsewhere are in reality an example of communal violence. The debate within Islamic societies is not about how to challenge the West, but how to respond and organise themselves to deal with their material backwardness. The majority of the moderate voices within the Islamic World have not hit the headlines for moderation does not make news. It should be our task to ensure that these voices of moderation are heard both within the region and outside.

A constructive dialogue between the different faiths is an essential component of the required new agenda. Otherwise we may easily regress into a new form of

inter-communal confrontation that will undermine the peace being concluded among governments. That is why Jordan has been promoting inter-religious dialogue and intercultural, intercivillisation dialogue through the last two decades. Since our meeting in Casablanca last year, a pioneering step has been undertaken in this regard in establishing this dialogue, not least of all in the hearts of our interlocutors in Brussels at the EU, and I thank those interlocutors.

I look forward with you to continuing this process through Barcelona and beyond and I hope these two pillars of this agenda to which I have referred will effectively ensure that we are thinking not only of material benefit but of moral uplift, not only of a commitment which is pragmatic, but a commitment which is ethical and motivated by our concern for the greatest good for the greatest number. I thank you all for your kind attention and your patience and for those obsessed with short-term financial calculations, one may say: what value do you attach to one human life saved whether Muslim, Jewish or Christian.

Between a constructive dialogue between the different faiths is an essential component of the required new agenda. Otherwise we may easily regress into a new form of

By Ali Kassay

MENA mania

SO, THE MIDDLE East and North Africa Economic Summit affectionately called MENA, has come and gone. Already the last stragglers are jumping up and down on their suitcases in a vain attempt to cram in them the vast quantities of literature which, doubtless, will enrich their lives in the long winter evenings ahead.

As we bid farewell to our honourable guests, and life in Amman returns to its normal pace, I would be negligent not to avail myself of this opportunity to address a special word of thanks to that fine body of men and women that made it all possible: Jordanian bureaucrats.

The MENA conference, we remind ourselves, was, essentially, an exercise designed for the benefit of the private sector. Its objective was to encourage Jordanian businessmen to come out of the closet (or, to be more accurate, to bring their fortunes out of the closet), and to explore with their foreign homologues the prospects of joint ventures that would enrich both parties, and their societies through the much acclaimed trickle down effect. But this does not in any way diminish the credit due to the public sector.

So keen were our bureaucrats to help the Jordanian businessman, that they took it upon themselves to decide for him which projects will be discussed, and with whom. They even spared him the effort of deciding whether to attend the conference or not, by selecting the businessmen that would be present.

Nor were we, as hosts, less attentive to the needs of our guests, who were spared any inconvenience, even the bother of taking a taxi. Instead, according to participants, they had to wait endlessly, each in the bus assigned to him until the vehicle filled up, while other buses were zooming about empty, to unknown destinations, all contributing to one of Amman's most spectacular traffic jams.

However, the most remarkable quality of the Jordanian bureaucracy is his consistency; particularly, his unshakable faith in, and unwavering devotion to the infrastructure. The summit allocated vast sums to improving the infrastructure, so that tourists and businessmen would be encouraged to come to Jordan and, having got here, to part with their money. Is there an echo or have we heard this before? Was this not the objective of development plans in the good old decade of the oil boom? In fact, we were not told that this objective has already been realised?

No matter. The exercise was impressive. So much so that I asked a businessman friend of mine: "What was the best thing that you got out of the summit?" His answer reminded me of Hawkeye in the popular TV series MASH. When asked what was the best thing he got out of the army, he answered: "Me!" Apparently, my friend went abroad for the duration of the conference, in order to get some business done.

20th Anniversary

Old, new readers value serious, credible newspaper

To the Editor:

I READ with great interest your special issue of Oct. 26, 1995. Congratulations on the 20th anniversary of the Jordan Times.

Ernesto Gomez Abascal,
Ambassador of Cuba
(to Jordan and Syria),
Damascus

MANY CONGRATULATIONS to the Jordan Times on its 20th anniversary. In wishing its staff further progress and success, we note with much satisfaction the newspaper's tradition of recruiting and training new journalists who subsequently become a model of credibility and professionalism to Jordanian colleagues. May the Jordan Times continue to stand out as a distinguished media institution.

Editor and staff,
Al Ordun (weekly)
newspaper,
Amman.

YOUR NEWSPAPER represents a shining side of Jordan, that which aspires to democracy, progress and enlightenment. I wish that our Arabic-language newspapers enjoyed the same ethical and professional journalistic courage as the Jordan Times. On your 20th anniversary, and on behalf of all my colleagues here, I wish you and your staff further success in playing your highly positive role in the Jordanian media.

Hani Hourani,
Director General,
Al Ordun Al Jadid
Research Centre,
Amman.

TWENTY YEARS of growth, success and achievement. What more would one expect from a serious newspaper known throughout its history for its truthfulness and credibility? Reading the "elegant" Jordan Times almost everyday has introduced two elements into my life. Reading has become an enjoyable habit, and the Jordan Times, itself, has become an essential element in my daily routine. Beyond any doubt, and despite all the tools of suppression which "some" had tried to use against the Jordan Times during certain periods of its existence, our journal will continue its march towards becoming "The Times" of the Arab World.

Said D. Khalifeh,
Amman.

LETTERS

THE JORDAN Times is one of the main sources of information about Jordan. It is unique in the sense that it carries articles that other newspapers do not carry. This is due in part to the nature and education of the Jordan Times staff, who dig for the information, verify its sources and write about it objectively. Another reason for the good performance of the newspaper is that it has a higher margin of freedom as an English daily. Despite its limited circulation, which is much less than that of its Arabic sister Al Rai daily, for example, it is of great value for researchers, scholars and the foreign community in Jordan. Despite the difficulties posed by the Press and Publications Law, the Penal Code and the law banning the revealing of state secrets and documents, and the restrictions imposed by the executive power on the flow of information to people, the Jordan Times was often able to overcome such difficulties. We wish the Jordan Times every progress and prosperity because we know that you sometimes had to walk a tight rope in order to win press freedom.

Abdullah Hammoudeh,
Hammoudeh Advertising
Agency,
Amman.

ALLOW ME to extend my greetings to the staff of the Jordan Times for their strenuous efforts in producing a paper that is credible, authentic and trustworthy for so many people. Many acquaintances of mine praise the way news items are edited and presented. However, I know for certain that you will always accept criticism, especially when it is well intended. To begin with, you have a problem in the erratic distribution of the Jordan Times. Moody distributors sometimes forget to bring it to the bookshop where I usually buy it. "Forgetting" is an excuse they use but it is not justified. So I call on you to put more pressure on the distributors to do their job or else design a course for them on how their memories can be improved. The second point I would like to raise is on whether Dr. Ahmad Majdoubeh's articles could be translated and used in an Arabic daily like Al Rai. Dr. Majdoubeh deals with important issues in the educational field and he is worth translating into Arabic for the benefit of ordinary Jordanian readers. I am ready to do such a job if Dr. Majdoubeh is interested and nobody volunteers to do it.

Khader Al Atrash,
P.O. Box 410647,
Amman 11141.

THE JORDAN Times qualifies for felicitations and commendations for bringing current news at the doorsteps of its readers and also "sensation-

al news" in its "Column Eight" on the back page. During my three years as a diplomat at the Pakistani Embassy in Amman, I thoroughly enjoyed reading the Jordan Times. Your claim "to celebrate not only because the J.T. has survived against, at times, insurmountable odds, but also because the newspaper has achieved a decent level of respectability, maturity and reliability at this very tender age" is fully justified. As it is said that "it grows as it goes," the Jordan Times has indeed over the years added many feathers to its hat. However, there is one point which I would like to bring to your attention, and which was shared by some of my colleagues in the diplomatic circle in Amman. It is that the Jordan Times is uneven — I would not say partial — in reporting events of a country vis-a-vis its neighbours. I hope you get my message and I would not like to contest or elaborate on this, and leave it to your judgement. I would like to congratulate you once again for bringing out an excellent newspaper and not being the "Izvestia" of Jordan. As I miss my friends and colleagues in Jordan, I really do miss reading the Jordan Times daily. The 20th anniversary of your newspaper is an occasion for which you amply qualify to celebrate and rejoice.

Shaikat Ali Mukadam,
First Secretary/Head of
Chancery,
Embassy of Pakistan,
Baghdad.

MAY I take this opportunity to congratulate the Jordan Times on its 20th anniversary. Despite having only been in the country for less than a month, I am already an avid reader and reach for your paper first thing in the morning to get the latest economic, world and local news.

Hector Low,
Manager, Language Centre,
The British Council,
Amman.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY to each and every one at the Jordan Times. I cannot believe that 20 years have passed since our friendship started.

Saiba Khouri,
Amman.

KEEP UP the good work. Happy 20th birthday.

Kumar Malhotra,
Marianna Al Far,
BBC office,
Amman.

Chairman closing

Chairman of the MENA Economic Summit

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Chairman's statement at closing of MENA summit

Following is the full text of a statement read by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, chairman of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) summit at the closing session of the three-day summit on Tuesday:

I WOULD like to say that it is my duty in terms of what I have before me of the remaining moments with you, to say a few words, not only on behalf of the Chair, but I hope, on behalf of all the Friends of the Chairman, of whom I recognise many among you, who have participated in the responsibility of guiding the discussions of the last few days, not only at this plenary but also in the four sessions.

I think it is self-evident that the thematic approach has contributed a qualitative difference to the work of this process and it is my hope that I think I share with many of you, that the creative ideas intended to sustain a new era of peace through a process of socio-economic development will prove effective in improving the quality of life of people in this region, of addressing and rectifying the existing disparities; that this thematic approach will give dividends in the years ahead. It was evident that during these discussions the issue of regional cooperation and integration was regarded as a process that must be actively pursued in order for economies of scale to be addressed in the perspective of projects, where feasibility is a yardstick that cannot be achieved other than through close attention to detail. Financing mechanisms for the region have assumed a high level of attention during the discussions, I am glad to say, and where views have diverged on the necessity to establish new financial mechanisms, I am glad to say that the main conclusion of the conference has emerged in identifying the region's immense potential, a potential that must be nurtured through concrete measures to be adopted in an interdisciplinary manner and to serve as a basis for the aspired developmental goals.

Our vision, ladies and gentlemen, has come closer to reality, through focusing on what Klaus Schwab describes as the "spirit of Amman," the facilitator between government, business and international financial institutions. The need to rehabilitate this region has to be addressed. Peaceful relations have been redefined. We are no longer speaking of an East-West axis but are going further to addressing and enabling new concepts to emerge such as special economic zones, regional trade hubs, and transportation hubs. Collectively we might even dare to think of a logistic hub that can serve the Middle East, Mediterranean area, Eastern Europe, and West Asian countries. A new linkage between trade and transport has emerged in the new reality of peace which must be capitalised upon sooner rather than later.

I personally am delighted that the water issue has received the attention it deserves, that the concept of a Water Summit next year has been tabled. The discussion has moved from generalisations to specialisation, with emphasis placed on creating "growth for water" in terms of conservation, proper management and new water sources including the use of desalination.

In the discussions on trade and industry, the inter and intra-regional cooperation themes have provided an overall perspective, where cumulative rules of origin, know-how transfer, and industrial standards have assumed internationally accredited characteristics.

It is our hope that the Jordan Rift Valley development plan can establish an institutional framework for this concept. A request is being positively received on the development of such a concept by a principal partner in the Jordan Valley Steering Committee and I refer here to the government of the United States. Our approach, I hope, is inclusive, and aims to provide the appropriate context for this ambitious plan. It is our vision that the Jordan Rift Valley will become a driving force for the participation of all regional parties, as well as the international community at large in order to create a new interdisciplinary developmental reality where all will benefit.

Israel, Enron sign gas deal

(Continued from page 14)

Sheikh Hamad said his country would lift the primary boycott of Israel once "there is comprehensive Middle East peace."

"Anyone can say what he wants," Sheikh Hamad was quoted as saying. "We did not precede anyone in normalisation, and during the (Arab-Israeli) wars, our position was clear. And now in peace, we hope our brethren will not deny us the participation."

Amman Declaration MENA summit sets ground for action

Following is the final text of the Amman Declaration released at the end of the Middle East and North Africa economic summit that concluded Tuesday:

ON OCTOBER 29-31, 1995, the second Middle East/North Africa Economic Summit was held in Amman, Jordan under the patronage of His Majesty King Hussein Bin Talal. The Summit co-sponsored by the United States and the Russian Federation, with the support of the European Union, Canada, and Japan, brought together government and business leaders from the Middle East and North Africa, Europe, the Americas, and Asia.

Summit participants thank His Majesty King Hussein for his able leadership and for the extraordinary efforts by Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to make this Summit a success. The participants also expressed their appreciation for the partnership of the World Economic Forum, which assisted so ably in organising this event.

The goals of the Summit were to facilitate the expansion of private sector investment in the region, to cement a public-private partnership which will ensure that end, and to work to enhance regional cooperation and development.

In this spirit, business leaders from the Middle East, North Africa, and other regions were able to conclude a number of significant commercial and business transactions at the Summit that will help augment the productive capacity of the region and contribute to its broad-based economic development. These ventures involved projects in the fields of tourism, telecommunications, and transportation. Reflecting this public-private partnership, a number of these ventures will benefit from government guarantees, technical assistance, and other support from the international community.

Government representatives conducted a series of negotiations over the past year on institutional arrangements as called for in the Casablanca Declaration which would help underpin the peace process. In this respect, the following agreements have been reached:

— A Bank for Economic Cooperation and Development in the Middle East and North Africa will be established in Cairo. The Bank — as described in its draft articles — will be structured to promote development of the private sector, support regional infrastructure projects, and provide a Forum to promote regional economic cooperation. The Task Force will finalise its negotiations by December 31, 1995 and will continue to explore proposals for the creation of a project preparation and financial intermediation facility. Those wishing to join the Bank will begin their national ratification processes therefore. Others wish to leave open the option of joining the Bank at a later date, in light of the evolution of institutional arrangements and other developments. The Economic Summit will review this issue at its next meeting.

— The establishment of a Regional Tourism Board, the Middle East-Mediterranean Travel and Tourism Association, to facilitate tourism and promote the region as a unique and attractive tourist destination. The Board will include both public and private representatives.

— The establishment of a Regional Business Council to promote cooperation and trade among the private sectors of the countries of the region.

— The formal inauguration of the Economic Summit Executive Secretariat, which is located in Rabat and works to advance the public-private partnership, promoting contacts, sharing data, and fostering private sector investment in the region. The participants expressed their appreciation to the Moroccan government for its contribution to this effort, and confirmed their support for its ongoing activities.

As a complement to the regional institutions called for at Casablanca, the Steering Group of the Multilateral Peace

Negotiations has decided to establish the REDWG Monitoring Committee Secretariat as a permanent regional economic institution to be based in Amman. All participating parties have agreed that this institution will promote and strengthen regional economic cooperation in the Middle East and North Africa. The regional parties strongly recommend that the Secretariat's activities will cover the range of sectors within the REDWG Monitoring Committee's work, i.e. infrastructure, tourism, trade, finance, and areas within the Copenhagen Plan of Action. The core parties in close consultation with the European Union and other members of the Monitoring Committee undertake to finalise the appropriate document on the structure and operational functions of this institution, which will be submitted to the next meeting of the REDWG plenary, with a view to the commencement of the institution's activities in the first half of 1996. This REDWG plenary will consider the matter, take appropriate action, and report to the upcoming meeting of the Multilateral Steering Group.

The participants at the Summit expressed their strong support for continued progress in the peace process begun at Madrid exactly four years ago, and the importance of achieving a comprehensive peace. Participants took particular note of advances made in the past year. Summit participants welcomed the signing of the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and took favourable note of the significant progress made in implementing the Treaty of Peace between Israel and Jordan. The Summit welcomed the decision to organise in Paris, in December 1995, the Ministerial Conference on Economic Assistance for the Palestinians. The summit also took note of the positive contribution made towards peace by multilateral working groups. While welcoming an increasingly positive atmosphere of openness in the region, the Summit recognised that the circle of peace needs to be widened. Participants expressed the hope that peace agreements between Israel and Syria and Israel and Lebanon would be concluded as soon as possible. The summit welcomed significant steps taken by regional parties to the Taba Declaration and by the GCC (the Gulf Cooperation Council) with regard to lifting the boycott on Israel, and expressed its support for additional efforts to end the boycott.

The participants at the Summit declared their intent to implement as soon as possible the understandings reached in Amman. With respect to commercial activities, the business representatives reaffirmed their intention to follow through on the commercial ventures reached here and explore new opportunities to expand trade and investment in the region. On the part of government, the officials attending the Summit declared their intention to support the activities of the private sector, most particularly by getting the new institutions established in Amman up and running as soon as possible. The participants also welcomed the measures taken by regional parties to open their economies and join the global economy.

To continue such a process whose blueprint and institutions have been established here, in Amman today, two brotherly countries announced their interest to host the next session of the MENA summit. They are Qatar and Egypt.

His Majesty King Hussein conducted the necessary consultations with the distinguished representatives of the two brotherly states, as well as with other interested parties. He gladly announced that Qatar has graciously conceded its offer to host the next summit in favour of Egypt, who will host it. And it has been agreed by all, including Jordan, the present host, as well as Egypt and others, that Qatar will be the venue of the Middle East/North Africa Economic Summit in 1997.

Jordan performs — U.S. officials

(Continued from page 1)

The Europeans of the region sought a smaller-scale institution that would solicit funds from existing lenders in the region.

The "real story" of the bank, Ms. Spero said, is that it "fills a vital financial need and represents a significant step in the peace process."

"It is less of a development bank than a merchant bank," she said.

Ms. Spero said later in the day that the plan was for a "lean and mean" bank — \$5 billion in capital — compared to \$12 billion for the post-World War II European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and \$40 billion for the Asian Bank — will be used to raise funds through co-financing with existing financial institutions. The bank will also participate in equity financing, offer guarantees and organise technical assistance.

The official said she did not feel support was lacking from either Europe or the GCC countries, saying that "we have been negotiating the bank with broad support" since late last year, and that "we had support to actually launch the bank." Some Gulf states have joined, but Ms. Spero declined to identify them.

Seventy per cent of the bank's shares will be subscribed — the remaining 30 per cent are reserved for those who adopted a "wait and see" stand towards the bank.

"Seven European and Gulf states haven't joined," she said. "Many participants said 'leave the door open'. We hope and expect others to join as the peace process evolves." Ms. Spero said the bank's task force hopes to have the bank up and running within 18 months to two years.

Mr. Ross countered claims that the bank had become a divisive issue between Europe, which is relegated to a back seat of Middle East peace negotiations, and the U.S., the main sponsor of the peace process. "Our view of the Europeans," said Mr. Ross, "is that they are partners. They are important in creating the underpinnings of peace."

SIEMENS AG - Jordan Branch is proud to announce the signing of the contract for the installation of Local Line Plant Networks for 300.000 Subscriber Lines



On Oct. 31 1995, the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) has signed an agreement with SIEMENS AG and Partners to install Local Line Plant Networks in several areas all around Jordan at a cost of JD 25 million within the framework of the National Telecommunication Programme.

SIEMENS will implement the project within 36 months.

The agreement was signed by TCC Director General Mr. Walid Dweik and Director International Sales Mr. Franz Schmidt on behalf of SIEMENS AG and Partners in the presence of the Chairman of the board of TCC Mr. Jamal Sataireh, The Minister of Post and Communication, The German Ambassador, Dr. Reiniers and Member of the Managing Board of SIEMENS AG Prof. Dr. Hans Guenter Danielmeyer

SIEMENS

Settlers punch Hebron schoolgirls

HEBRON (AFP) — Israeli settlers punched and slightly injured four Palestinian girls and a woman teacher outside a school in the flashpoint town of Hebron on Tuesday, witnesses said. The fracas erupted at the Cordoba school across from a Jewish settlement in the centre of Hebron. The injured, including four girls aged between 10 and 12, were taken to hospital but were not seriously hurt. Settlers had already clashed with pupils last month when a Palestinian flag was raised at the school at the start of the new term. Some 400 Israeli settlers live in the centre of Hebron, home to 120,000 Palestinians.

Demonstrator killed in Gaza

RAFAH (AFP) — A demonstrator was killed and a Palestinian policeman wounded in a clash over the construction of an airport on the Gaza Strip on Tuesday, police and witnesses said. Police moved in to break up a demonstration by several dozen protesters as bulldozers cleared the site. General Abdul Razek Majada, Palestinian security chief, said a demonstrator fired on his men, wounding one of them. Yusef Abu Smea, 21, whose family owns land which is being expropriated for the airport, was shot dead in the ensuing exchange of fire. A witness said that gunmen in a car had fired on the police who shot back.

EU-Israel accord is initiated

BRUSSELS (AFP) — The European Union (EU) and Israel on Tuesday initiated a research and development accord, completing a broader association agreement already initiated in July. Israeli diplomatic sources said. The accord is expected to be signed at a meeting of EU foreign ministers in Brussels on Nov. 20, ahead of the Nov. 27-28 Euro-Mediterranean conference in Barcelona. Under the research and development accord, high-tech Israeli companies may tender for contracts in Europe on the same basis as companies based inside the EU's single market.

Egypt arrests son of Brotherhood founder

CAIRO (R) — Egyptian police have arrested prominent Muslim Brotherhood member Ahmad Seif Al-Islam Al-Banna, security sources said on Tuesday. They said Mr. Banna, son of Brotherhood founder Hassan Al-Banna and a leading member of the Egyptian Bar Association, was arrested on Monday night at an election rally and detained for questioning. Eighty-two members of the outlawed Brotherhood are already being tried in a Cairo military court on charges that include forming an illegal group, inciting people to revolt against the government, distributing anti-government leaflets, and giving money to fugitive militants and families.

Sweden to expel suspect in bombings

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — Sweden decided Tuesday to deport Algerian Islamic fundamentalist Abdul Krim Deneche, suspected by France of involvement in the July 25 bombing of an underground train in Paris, the justice ministry announced. But a special cabinet meeting decided that the deportation would not take place until a host country had agreed to take him. The meeting ordered the release of Deneche, 39, who was arrested here on Aug. 21, but said he must report three times a week to police. A legal adviser to the justice ministry, Lars Nilsson, said the cabinet had decided Deneche could not be deported to Algeria because of the civil war there between fundamentalists and the military-backed regime. Sweden has refused a French extradition request for Deneche, saying he had an alibi for the bombing at Saint-Michel metro station, central Paris, in which seven people died.

Bomb kills 22 at Iraqi rebel office

ANKARA (AP) — A bomb attack on offices of the main anti-government group in northern Iraq killed at least 22 people Tuesday, the organisation reported. But U.N. guards in the area told the Associated Press they have no confirmation of the attack. They spoke on condition of anonymity.

Rabin wants to nail down borders of future Palestine

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin aims to go into the November 1996 general election with a draft accord on the final borders of a Palestinian entity, an Israeli weekly reported Tuesday.

The army, meanwhile, wants to renegotiate some of the West Bank redeployment maps signed with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

The Jerusalem Report said the prime minister wants to launch negotiations with the self-rule authority on the final status of the Palestinian territories as early as March.

Mr. Rabin's spokeswoman Aliza Goren, contacted by AFP, said she was looking into the report.

The prime minister announced in parliament earlier this month that Israel plans to annex parts of the West Bank, especially around Jerusalem, in the north along the Israeli border, and in the Jordan Valley.

According to the Jerusalem Report, which quoted sources close to the premier, Mr. Rabin hopes an accord in principle on the future Palestinian borders would quash criticism of the West Bank autonomy accord signed on September 28.

The right-wing Likud, running neck-and-neck with Mr. Rabin's Labour in the opinion polls, says the accord will

return Israel to insecure borders of before the 1967 Middle East war.

Apart from borders, final status talks due to open by May also cover the explosive issues of Jerusalem and the fate of Jewish settlements and Palestinian refugees.

Mr. Rabin wants to delay negotiations on the other issues until after the elections but believes PLO fears of a right-wing victory would facilitate an agreement on borders, the Jerusalem Report said.

The prime minister has said the future Palestinian entity would be "less than a state," while the Palestinians insist on a state of their own with annexed East Jerusalem as its capital.

Five years of interim Palestinian autonomy were launched in Gaza and the West Bank enclave of Jericho in May 1994.

Under the Sept. 28 accord, autonomy is to be extended to West Bank towns by the end of this year. Hebron, where 400 Jews live among 120,000 Palestinians, has been ruled a special case and Israeli troops are to stay on.

An Israeli military official revealed Tuesday that the army wanted to renegotiate some of the maps signed with the PLO as part of the West Bank deal.

Chief-of-Staff General Amnon Shahak has detected

several "errors" which emerged when comparing the maps to the reality on the ground, the official told the daily Jerusalem Post.

As examples, the military official said a by-pass road for Jewish settlers crossed a zone which was to be handed over to Palestinian control, like an old Jewish cemetery in Hebron that is to be supervised by Israel.

Sixteen Palestinian homes lie in the path of another planned by-pass in Hebron, the newspaper added.

Mr. Rabin meanwhile warned British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind not to visit the PLO's unofficial headquarters in an East Jerusalem during a forthcoming trip.

"We believe that foreign personalities who have ministerial rank should not make official visits to the Orient House. It is a question of principle," Mr. Rabin told the parliamentary foreign affairs and defence committee.

"The United States has acknowledged this point, but the countries of the European Union have rejected it," he added.

Mr. Rifkind begins on Sunday a six-day tour of the Middle East during which he will travel to Israel and the Palestinian territories as well as Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Egypt.

Israel refuses to permit Shaqaqi burial in Gaza

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — The Islamic Jihad movement in Palestine complained on Tuesday that Israel had refused to let it bring back the body of its assassinated leader Fathi Shaqaqi for burial in his native town of Rafah in self-ruled Gaza.

"Palestinian security sources in Gaza informed the movement that Israel is refusing completely to transfer the body of Doctor Shaqaqi to be buried in Rafah," said Ala Al-Saftawi, editor of the Islamic Jihad's Al-Istiklal newspaper in Gaza.

Islamic Jihad had accused Israel's Mossad of assassinating Shaqaqi in Malta last Thursday and vowed revenge. Israel did not confirm or deny the charge but welcomed his death. Shaqaqi's body was flown to Syria on Tuesday for burial there.

Mr. Saftawi said Islamic Jihad believed the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) gave Israel the green light to kill Shaqaqi.

"The estimations in the Islamic Jihad movement say that the American intelligence looked through the Israeli plan to kill Fathi Shaqaqi, approved it and gave the green light for Israel to work it out," he told Reuters.

"This was done in the meeting between the head of the CIA and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on Thursday, the 19th of October, in Tel Aviv," Mr. Saftawi said.

Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Islamic Jihad sources in Amman said on Tuesday they expected Shaqaqi's successor to tilt the movement towards more

militancy and violence. Ramadan Abdullah Shallah, 38, a Gaza born, Western-educated political science and economics professor, was unanimously elected secretary general of Islamic Jihad two days after the assassination of Shaqaqi.

In his first public appearance after his appointment, Mr. Shallah was present at Damascus airport when Shaqaqi's body was flown to Syria from Malta.

Mr. Shallah, along with Shaqaqi, founded the Islamic Jihad movement in the early 1980s in Gaza. In the mid-1980s, he moved to Britain to continue his academic career before moving to the United States, where he obtained a doctorate in political science and economics and taught.

He was remembered as a fiery preacher in Gaza's mosques before he left for Britain. He left the United States last year and now resides in either Lebanon or Syria.

Islamic Jihad officials said that since Shaqaqi's death there was a feeling the movement was rapidly tilting towards violence after months of refraining from attacks in an uneasy truce with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

"The truce period with the PNA is over. After months of quiet, the only thing on the movement's mind is revenge," said an Islamic Jihad official. "I believe we are moving towards armed struggle and militancy."

PLO officials said they had succeeded a few months ago to convince Jihad to suspend attacks against Israelis to allow the expansion of

the occupied West Bank under a self-rule deal. Shaqaqi's killing had torn up this unwritten agreement, they added.

With a hard core of several hundred militant followers, Islamic Jihad is considered more uncompromising in its opposition to Israel than the larger Hamas militant group.

Reuven Paz, a lecturer on Islamic movements at Israel's Haifa University, said Mr. Shallah was more involved in the political and intellectual side of the group than with its military operations.

"He is regarded as a political activist — not a military leader," Mr. Paz said.

In recent years, Mr. Shallah headed a Tampa, Florida think tank — World Islamic Studies Enterprise — formerly affiliated with the University of Southern Florida, and was a contributor to "Political Readings," an Arabic-language quarterly journal put out by the institute.

The university cut its ties with the institute in June, when news reports linked it to extremists.

The Yediot Ahronot daily newspaper said Mr. Shallah relayed orders from Shaqaqi, who in recent years was based in Damascus, to Islamic Jihad operatives in the West Bank and Gaza.

Mr. Rabin accused Syria of being a major "terrorism" centre and expressed pessimism about chances for a peace deal before Israeli elections next year.

Mr. Rabin made the charges in an address to a closed-door session of parliament's foreign affairs and defence commission.

Clinton says Ohio talks last chance for Bosnia

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — President Bill Clinton said on Tuesday the Bosnia peace talks that open in Ohio on Wednesday may represent the last chance "to turn the horror of war to the promise of peace."

"We have come to a defining moment in Bosnia," Mr. Clinton said. "This is the best chance we've had for peace since the war began. It may be the last chance we have for a very long time. Only the parties to this terrible conflict can end it. The world now looks to them to turn the horror of war to the promise of peace."

The only way to stop these horrors is to make peace," Clinton said, adding, "We will succeed only if America continues to lead."

The president's message on the importance of U.S. leadership came a day after the U.S. house of representatives voted to require him to seek

congressional approval for sending U.S. troops to a NATO-led force to police a peace agreement.

Mr. Clinton said he would seek support for the deployment from the Republican-held Congress once a peace agreement is signed but stressed that he was not bound by law to receive congressional authorisation.

The Republican-held lower chamber voted 315 to 103 Monday for the non-binding resolution requiring approval for deploying U.S. troops in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Mr. Clinton, who has committed to sending some 20,000 troops as part of the 60,000-strong force, said he will meet with leaders of both parties Wednesday to discuss the U.S. role in ending the war.

The president spoke to reporters surrounded by his advisers who briefed him ahead of the talks with presi-

dents Alija Izetbegovic, Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia and Franjo Tudjman of Croatia beginning Wednesday at the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio.

Meanwhile about 30 per cent of the some 18,000 U.N. troops in Bosnia will be withdrawing in the next three months because of hopes for peace in Bosnia and U.N. financial constraints, U.N. officials said.

The reduction was first announced in August as part of a cost-cutting measure, and because the commander of U.N. troops here, General-Rupert Smith, decided that there were too many U.N. forces there.

Since then, their tasks have been reduced still further because of an August and September offensive that reduced the vulnerability of the Bihac pocket in northwestern Bosnia.

Shaath lambasts Israeli delays in self-rule expansion and Congress vote on Jerusalem

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Planning in the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) Nabil Shaath strongly criticised Israel's attitude vis-a-vis the implementation of its agreements with the Palestinian leadership saying that the Israeli government's behaviour was strange and its conduct unacceptable.

Addressing a press conference on the final day of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit, Dr. Shaath said that Israel's credibility was not good, adding that the Palestinians had been going through hard times after the signing of the Gaza and Jericho deal and later after the Washington agreement because of Israel's delays and procrastinations.

"Israel's behaviour constitutes a violation of the agreements," he said, adding that the repeated closure of the Palestinian territories and the siege it imposes on Arab towns had been adversely affecting the economic situation of the Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The future relationship between Palestine and Jordan, Dr. Shaath said, is subject to the will of the people in the two countries who can determine their own future with their own free will.

"A special relationship is binding the two peoples and this relationship forms a solid foundation for the future after the Palestinians win their full rights and sovereignty over their national soil and after the establishment of an independent Palestinian state," he said.

On Jerusalem, Dr. Shaath said the future status of the city will be discussed by the Israeli and Palestinian sides in the final stage of negotiations due in May of 1996.

He expressed astonishment over Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres' comment on Monday that Israel will never give up the Holy City as its capital or allow its division.

"When the Palestinians entered the negotiations with Israel they received international guarantees that the Arab city of Jerusalem is regarded as an occupied territory since 1967," Dr. Shaath said.

"We depend on logic, international justice and U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, which provide

crossing the borders," he added, also referring to water, tourism and trade as other areas where an economic confederation made more sense.

"But when it comes to a political solution, I do not believe it is proper for me to comment since it is an issue that has to be negotiated between Jordan and the Palestinians."

Asked whether Israel would "push" for a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation, Mr. Peres simply asserted: "Israel is not a pushing country, so we shall not push."

The Israeli minister said the fruits of peace would not be felt immediately on the popular level. "It is like an apple tree which takes several years" to bear fruits as opposed to "tomatoes, which take a few months."

Asked how Israel was treating the Jordanian demand for the return of property owned by Jordanians in Jerusalem, now that the two countries have made peace, Mr. Peres referred to the multilateral working groups on refugees and displaced persons and that these groups would deal with the issue.

"It is an issue (in which) both parties have claims," he asserted. "There are lost properties in other Arab countries."

But reminded that the issue was strictly bilateral and that there is no record of any Israeli losing his or her

property in Jordan, the foreign minister said: "We will deal with the matter when it comes up on the agenda."

"With Jordan, peace started with answering the Jordanian demand by returning to Jordan all its land — 380 square kilometres. We gave back Jordan's water. Now there are other issues, outstanding questions, (and) we shall deal with them as they come."

Mr. Peres described Jordanian-Israeli relations as developing in a very satisfying manner, "not only from our point of view but also from the Jordanian point of view."

"It is more than just an agreement between two parties," he said, referring to the two countries' joint efforts to raise \$400 million in European assistance for water projects stipulated in the Jordan-Israel peace treaty and other collective moves towards developing bilateral as well as regional cooperation.

Mr. Peres predicted that Jordan's tourism revenue would go up to \$800 million in 1995 and to \$1.2 billion in 1996.

With the Palestinians, he said, the main problem was the "acts of violence."

"If these were to be eliminated, the picture will be totally different. We will not have to have closures (of the West Bank and Gaza) and we will not have to have harass people...I can see very smooth relations."

According to Mr. Peres, the geographic proximity among the three would warrant such a relationship. "Take an issue like electricity," he said. "You cannot keep power (from

for the return of all the Palestinian lands occupied since 1967 in addition to the Arab lands in the Golan and Lebanon," he said.

Dr. Shaath said the U.S. Congress' vote to move the American Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem was taken to serve election purposes in the United States and aimed at obstructing the peace process. He said that the vote favours Israeli extremists' position.

Dr. Shaath paid tribute to His Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan for their unique role and participation in the MENA economic summit and said the conference had achieved great results that would reflect very positively on the economies of the region.

Dr. Shaath said the summit was breaking a long-standing Arab-Israeli stalemate by dealing with Israeli issues in a constructive manner, he said.

Dr. Shaath said the summit was breaking a long-standing Arab-Israeli stalemate by dealing with Israeli issues in a constructive manner, he said.

Peres: Great contribution

(Continued from page 1) infrastructure...the seaport (now that) Jordan is trying to be the centre for the export of phosphates and potash — we have two ports (Aqaba and Eilat) and both are under-employed — let us have one port."

"Why have two railroads?" he said, referring to Jordan's plans to build a rail network while Israel has relatively good rail system.

The focus on Jordanian territory for such projects, he said, came because "Jordan is a far larger country than Israel. It has nearly 100,000 square kilometres while Israel, with the (occupied) West Bank and Gaza Strip, has only 24,000."

"There are also suggestions that the main station for the supply of natural gas from Qatar 'will be in Jordan,' he said. 'If Jordan wants to supply gas to Israel, why not?'"

"The idea is basically is that the forecast is peace, not war," he added. "We don't want to organise our lives as enemies in the future, we are two friendly countries."

Mr. Peres also cited examples of European countries which house utilities for the exclusive use of another and said he did not find any reason why arrangements like that could not be made in the Middle East.

In reply to a question whether he envisaged an

King voices Jordan's pride

(Continued from page 1) possible to go along the right path and the best. "The problem is not of abuse. There could be abuses on the part of some people in the name of democracy. We try to deal with all these issues in order to reach the aspired objectives," he added.

Asked whether Jordan achieved what it aspired to achieve at conference at the economic and political level, the King said, "Thank God it did."

Asked he intended to follow up on the recommendations of this conference, the King said:

"Follow up is going to be through the effort of everybody with regard to all those who had contributed to the success of the conference, with regard to the state, the private sector and all Jordanians. We all are earnestly interested in the future of this country."

MENA summit proclaimed a huge success

(Continued from page 1)

It said business leaders at the three-day conference struck deals in the fields of tourism, telecommunications and transport which would promote economic development.

His Majesty King Hussein described the summit as "an extremely positive summit."

It's the first step towards prosperity and development for the region and the Arab World," he said.

The summit brought

together for the first time in Amman Israeli and Arab businessmen who interacted well in the conference, participants said.

One of the major projects was an indirect agreement by Qatar to U.S. Enron corporation.

"There was the beginning of many joint ventures of great importance," said Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres.

Emphasised during the summit was the need to liberalise economies and for a

new spirit of openness and barrier-free trade.

The bank for economic development and cooperation will be set up in Cairo. The articles of the bank will be drawn up by a task force which will cooperate its work before the end of the year.

The task force will also study proposals for the creation of an intermediate financial institution which will make policy.

The regional tourism board will be set up by the public and private sector.

The regional business council will act as a coordinating body to promote cross-border cooperation and trade in the private sector.

A MENA summit executive secretariat in Rabat was made permanent.

"There is a lot of interest in the projects Jordan had presented," Ministry of Trade and Industry Ali Abul Ragheb told the Jordan Times in an interview.

Jordan presented 27 projects worth \$3.5 billion and the private sector 136 projects worth \$1.2 billion to the conference.

Mr. Abul Ragheb said the highest interest was on the tourism sector, which accounted for about 50 per cent of the projects.

On industrial projects, he said, up to 30 per cent of projects presented had been officially considered.

But he stressed that the event was meant to allow for private sector representatives to explore the opportunities available and initiate contacts with their counterparts.

"Mr. Abul Ragheb said the 'enormous effort' Jordan had made in modernising its economy and introducing legislative reforms had been well received by the international community."

The minister told the Jordan Times that Jordan had done "what it could" to encourage investors who are starting to see the region as a bloc to invest in the Kingdom.

Mr. Abul Ragheb cautioned against high expectations of immediate results from the conference, pointing out that many of the projects were medium and long-term ventures that will take time to materialise.

Region presented itself

(Continued from page 1) adversely affected by the consequences of the Gulf crisis and war.

The Prince said that Jordan has always stressed that all peoples of the area should be involved in deciding the future of the region.

He said the absence of some Arab countries of the region from the conference was not a Jordanian responsibility, pointing that Syria and Lebanon made their own decisions not to participate in the conference.

"We did not reject the participation of Syria or Lebanon or Iraq or Iran... for practical reasons" some did not attend the summit but

will participate in the Barcelona conference, said Prince Hassan.

Syria and Lebanon will attend the European-Mediterranean conference which the European Union will organise in November.

Prince Hassan said in response to a question that the Israeli participation at the summit did not amount to more than 10 per cent of the total participation from 63 countries, adding that sovereign laws of the countries of the region can guarantee the maintaining of a balanced relationship with countries of the world.

WEF outlines public/private roles

(Continued from page 1)

— Promoting management as a professional skill;

— Developing national and regional marketing and sales skills;

— Last but not least, an investor-friendly climate necessitates the:

— Encouraging participation of foreign ownership;

— Adopting international legal and accountancy standards;

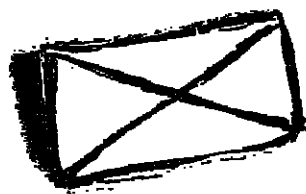
— Introducing stable and well-defined monetary policies;

— Accelerating privatisation and ensure broad-based public participation and;

— Legislation to protect intellectual property rights and ensure enforcement.

The international business community welcomes the great strides that the Middle East and North Africa are already making towards economic liberalisation and sustained economic development. The community therefore looks forward to reviewing the results of the Amman Summit and subsequent developments in the region at the 1996 Middle East/North Africa Economic Summit. At the same time, the community calls on the Regional Business Council established by the Amman summit to adopt the principles enshrined in this document as part of its guiding philosophy.

Economic
M...
Arab, Israel
ready to es...
Summary
thematic
Jordan's credit



Mideast summit makes contacts, not contracts

AMMAN (R) — A year after the ground-breaking Casablanca conference the question on the agenda of this year's Amman economic summit was: "Is the Middle East open for business?"

Governments, led by the United States, took the podium and replied with a confident "yes." Private investors, who are expected to fund future prosperity, gave a polite "note quite yet."

The conference was billed as a way to attract investment to a potentially wealthy region, stabilised by U.S.-driven efforts to bring peace

between Israelis and Arabs. But the legacy of 50 years of conflict between Arab and Jew, inter-Arab rivalry, dead-end economic management, oppressive one-man rule and rampant arms-spending in many states is a hard one to shake off.

"Many of my business colleagues are sceptical," Percy Barnevik, president of power giant ABB Asea Brown Boveri said of the region. "They see it as unstable, dangerous."

"It has been disappointing to see the slow pace of money coming to Palestine — a lot

of talk and little action," he said.

Other businessmen too said little had changed in the year since Casablanca where Israelis rubbed shoulders openly for the first time with Arab investors.

"The region cannot be said to be open in a very serious way," said William Rytie, vice president of Baring Holding Company. He cited barriers to investment from wars, anti-market policies and red tape.

Israel, the regional economic superpower with a per capita GDP on average 10

times that of its neighbours, was opening up and benefiting from the peace process, investors said.

"We have an image problem," agreed Palestinian businessman Hani Abu Dayeh. "The purpose of this summit is to market the region in general not specific projects. We have to get the attention of guys who can invest anywhere... it is not only money we need but management skills, markets."

Governments presented a wishlist of mammoth infrastructure projects topping \$50

billion in a region that garnered only \$1 billion of the \$65 billion of capital floated into emerging markets in the peak year of 1993.

Many of the 1,000 businessmen said at the summit's off-the-record "networking breakfasts" and "contact breaks" that they did not need such a gathering to clinch deals.

They said most contracts announced at the summit such as a \$50 million Jordanian-Israeli chemical joint venture were known weeks in advance. Other announcements were about

agreements in principle rather than firm deals.

"The U.S. is very results-oriented," commented one U.S. businessman on Washington's efforts to promote the summit. "They have to have something to put in the showcase. The Amman declaration and the whole summit was stitched up in advance."

Washington and Israel, its closest Middle East ally, made much of the three "achievements" since Casablanca — agreements to set up regional tourism and business councils and a Middle East

development bank.

The U.S. has forged ahead with the bank despite opposition from European and Arab Gulf states.

"We do not need a bank," said a senior Gulf official who asked not to be identified. He said Gulf countries, allies of the West, had to attend the summit but believed the region's politics should be set straight before its economics. Holdouts Syria and Lebanon had to be brought in to the peace process for economic development to work.

The U.S. believes the region cannot wait and needs to

bolster its fledgling peace now through economics. Israel too does not want impoverished and potentially unstable neighbours, even though it left no doubt it sees its economic future based on trade with high-technology economies in Europe and North America.

In the end, the summit was more about contacts than contracts, about economic dreams rather than realities.

But even the Gulf official acknowledged that swapping business cards was a start to overcoming half a century of antagonism and isolation.

Arab, Israeli businessmen ready to establish ties

AMMAN (AP) — Arab businessmen are breaking a taboo on dealing with Israel by flocking to lunches and seminars hosted by Israeli officials at the Middle East economic summit underway here.

In the corridors of the Royal Cultural Centre, the main site for the three-day summit, Arab executives wearing traditional white headresses and robes exchange business cards and shake hands with their Israeli counterparts.

Other crowd an information desk set up by the Israeli embassy and grab handouts detailing regional projects presented by the Israeli government and private sector.

"This is something we could not have dreamed of a few months ago," said Israeli Agriculture Minister Ya'acov

Tsur. "This is an indication that the Middle East is changing."

Jordan, Egypt and the Palestinians have made peace with Israel and they are open to discussing joint projects with the Jewish state.

Other Arab governments are hesitant to end a boycott on Israel that has been in effect since the 1948 Middle East war. But Arab businessmen say they are ready to deal with Israel, which has the most dynamic economy in the region.

"The Gulf region is a potential market for Israeli products, know-how and technology," said Rashid Awaida Al Thani, a former chairman of Qatar's state-owned General Petroleum Co.

"We know it will take

some time. We hope it won't take long because we, as businessmen, are ready to start business immediately," he added.

But until peace becomes official between Qatar and Israel, businessmen from his country will only be able to make preliminary contacts, or will have to negotiate through third parties, he said.

Moshé Hananel, an Israeli tour operator, said he and his Gulf Arab counterparts are ready to begin organising tours that would take Israelis to the Gulf and send Gulf Arabs to Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem.

"Tour operators in Israel and in the Gulf are ready to start business, but we're waiting for a political decision," said Mr. Hananel, director of Galilee Tours.

French show interest in Jordan's communication and transport sectors

By Cathy King
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — France will continue its support for the development of transport and communication sectors in Jordan and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, a senior French government official said Tuesday.

French Secretary of State for Transport Anne-Marie Idrac told a press conference that Paris had shown "interest" in transport and communication projects in the Kingdom, including bridges over the River Jordan and developing the joint Jordan-Israel "peace airport" in Wadi Araba.

Ms. Idrac also said that France had also supported the establishment of the permanent secretariat of the Regional Economic Development Working Group (REDWG) in Jordan.

The evolution of infrastructure throughout the region is impor-

tant to economic development, but requires private and public funding, she said.

France and Jordan Monday signed a protocol to the value of around \$20 million.

Eighty-five per cent of the protocol, signed by Minister of Planning Rima Khalaf and French Finance Ministry Under-Secretary Hervé Gaymard, is the form of soft loans, while the remaining 15 per cent are grants.

The loans and grants were extended to Jordan to buy French goods and services and to finance studies on water, environment and civil aviation.

Ms. Idrac said France assumed the role of "shepherd" for transport within the framework of REDWG, one of the multilateral bodies formed along the tracks of the peace process, said Ms. Idrac.

She underlined that the setting up of infrastructure projects would reduce unemployment and improve infrastructure would contribute to all-round economic development.

While driving home the need to seek private sector funding for development projects, the French minister also observed that the role of governments should not be opposed.

"The European Union is one of the main donors in the world, providing the main bulk of financial contributions" to developing countries, she said.

Ms. Idrac also referred to France's assistance to Jordan through the Paris Club.

Currently Jordan's debt to France tops \$600 million. Last year the French government cancelled \$5 million. Negotiations are going on between the two governments over the conversion of a further \$75 million into equity swap.

With reference to the proposed establishment of a regional bank to which Saudi Arabia and the European Union have voiced opposition, Ms. Idrac said that while France was not opposed to it, her government viewed a creation of a fund for the mobilisation of money for large development projects to be a better formula.

"European countries and France in particular has proposed the gathering of finances in a fund as the best option" for the region, she said.

During 1994 and 1995, France had organised five technical conferences on transportation as part of its support for REDWG and the peace process, said Ms. Idrac.

The declared objective of those discussions was to facilitate the free movement of people, trade and capital within the MENA region, she added.

'Amman can soon become the trade capital of the region'

By Ghalia Alul
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — An Arab-Israeli businessman urged all Arabs to view MENA summit as an opportunity to "bridge the gap between Arab and Israeli business communities" and take advantage of the "gate" the politicians have opened to the "possibility of peace and social and economic relations."

In a press conference, Makram Khoury-Machool, president and managing director of Jaffa Group, an Arab business enterprise in Israel, noted the fear Arab businessmen and politicians have from a possible economic invasion in the region and said that there is no need for such fear.

"When we check the argument against economic (invasion), we find that it is far from true. In fact both sides can only gain from opening

up their economies to each other... escaping from dealing with Israelis because they are Israelis can only deepen the Arab inferiority complex in which the starting point will be that the Arab business is weaker than his Israeli counterpart," he said.

Mr. Khoury called for economic cooperation as well as technology exchange between Arab countries and Israel citing the benefits Arabs can gain in terms of reduced cost due to geographical proximity.

"Why shouldn't we exchange technology with Israel at a lower cost?" he said.

Journalists lashed out at Mr. Khoury for encouraging normalisation of relations with Israel and described his proposals as "strange."

He defended these accusations by saying that Arabs should deal with economy bearing in mind that the Arab World is moving towards eco-

nomic civilisation that should be shared with Israel.

"Therefore we should share the peace with the Israeli neighbour," he said.

Asked about the economic freedom Arab Israelis enjoy in Israel compared to the economic pressure Arabs in the West Bank encounter, Mr. Khoury denied this statement and said that studies showed that 40 per cent of the Arabs who live in Israel are suffering from poverty.

He said he believed Jordan's geographic position and the good relations it has with its neighbours can eventually turn it into the trade capital of the region.

"I believe that Amman can soon become the trade capital of our region. Jordan is the geographic and economic extension of economic market of Iraq and the oil rich Gulf states. It is also close to Israel and has good relations with it," he said.

Summary of thematic session

The economic climate

- Abdelhadi Al-Hamad, Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, Kuwait
- Jamsh Al-Mansoori, Arab Monetary Fund, Abu Dhabi
- Stanley Fischer, International Monetary Fund, Washington, DC
- Nesim Kirdar, Investcorp, Bahrain and Great Britain
- Ferdinand Piëch, Volkswagen, Germany
- Paul Volcker, Former Chairman Federal Reserve Board, USA

Moderator Basel Jaradat, Minister of Finance of Jordan

This plenary session on Monday morning marked the shift from politics to concrete business in the summit's agenda. The top business leaders recommended a set of concrete measures necessary to unlock the region's immense potential. Key to these measures is the role of the private sector as the engine of economic growth.

To strengthen the economic of peace, the business leaders stressed the need to orient the economies of the region, which are among the most protected in the world, towards globalisation and an export-driven growth strategy. "Tariffs and other barriers to trade slow down the development of the region," said Ferdinand Piëch.

Panelists agreed that integration needs to be increased in a region whose current intraregional trade amounts to a mere nine per cent of total exports. "By integrating with their neighbours, countries in the region can profit from regional synergies. Drawing from the strength of each country, the benefit to all can be maximised," said Nesim Kirdar.

Paul Volcker identified water, environment, energy, infrastructure, higher education and tourism as the sectors most apt for increased regional cooperation.

Panelists stressed the need to increase foreign direct investment in a region currently bypassed by international investment flows, receiving only one-third of one per cent of foreign investment to emerging markets. In this respect, Stanley Fischer stressed the need to reduce budget deficits and to increase competition in the financial sector by reducing entry barriers to financial markets.

Ferdinand Piëch drew attention to the important role of small and medium-sized companies from the region as partners of global players like Volkswagen. His own company produces wiring harness in Turkey, car components in Tunisia and electric parts in Morocco.

Merger fever rife in U.S. banking industry

WASHINGTON (AFP) — A new shake-out in the U.S. banking industry could be in the pipeline amid reports that two of the country's largest banks, BankAmerica and NationsBank, have been holding merger talks.

Spokesman at BankAmerica could not be reached and at NationsBank declined comment Monday on a report in Barron's weekly business report and the Los Angeles Times newspaper that the two banks had recently held merger talks.

The Los Angeles Times quoted BankAmerica sources, who added that there was no guarantee any deal would go through.

Such a merger between the third and fourth largest U.S. banks in terms of assets would create the nation's largest financial institution with combined assets of about \$410 billion.

Markets appeared to take a liking to reports of the possible merger with BankAmerica shares up 87 cents at \$63.5 and NationsBank up 62 cents at \$70.62 in morning trading in New York.

BankAmerica, the third largest U.S. bank, is based in San Francisco and has offices

mostly in the west of the country. The Charlotte, North Carolina-based NationsBank has offices mostly in the south.

Some analysts expressed doubt as to whether such a merger would actually help reduce costs and thereby create more profits for shareholders.

Rafael Soifer, an analyst with New-York-based Brown Brothers Harriman, said there was "no evidence that size per se was beneficial for earnings."

And the creation of a giant national bank "would not necessarily make sense" as management costs would likely remain high and BankAmerica business was more oriented towards the Pacific rim than the southern United States.

However, with increasing mergers among banks, the incentive was there for the pattern to continue, Mr. Soifer said.

Financial institutions, spurred by their desire to reduce costs and expand nationwide, have been consolidating as never before with at least six mergers announced among the top 50 U.S. banks this year.

Report says Eastern German economy still lagging despite progress

BERLIN (AFP) — Five years after German reunification, the economy of former East Germany still suffers from structural weaknesses in both capital and marketing, a report has said.

Nevertheless, production has made great strides since the crisis which followed the collapse of the communist state, according to the report by the BVS, the successor to the Treuhander which handled the privatisation of state assets.

Economic growth last year attained a record 9.0 per cent and this year was expected to reach 7.0 per cent.

Industrial output rose by 15 per cent in the first half of this year, the BVS said.

Private and public investments were expected to come this year to 13,340 German marks per inhabitant in the east — 46 per cent more than in the west (9,100 marks).

In manufacturing, investments will work out at 3,600 marks per capita compared to 1,900 marks in the former West Germany.

Investors who acquired privatised firms promised to invest a total of 217 billion

marks including 163 billion marks which were guaranteed in writing.

From 1990 to 1994, investment commitments exceeded targets by 42 per cent, a trend which was expected to continue, the BVS said.

Privatised firms invested 64 billion marks over the four years to end 1994, the organisation said.

As a result of this effort, the BVS said productivity of Eastern German firms was now 60 per cent that of firms in the west.

But it cautioned: "For many years to come, east German firms will have to strive harder than their competitors in the west to reach their level of productivity which is constantly rising."

Many small and medium-sized firms suffered from insufficient capital, a fact which justified maintaining state subsidies, the BVS said, adding that for the same reason it opposed introducing taxes on enterprises in the former east Germany.

BVS said east German firms were finding it very difficult to extend their operations beyond the borders of the old

East Germany which accounts for only about one fifth of the total population of Germany and therefore too small a market for healthy development.

The report also said east German firms were handicapped by their ex-communist image which prevented them becoming established in the west. At the same time, they are only slowly reconquering the markets they used to dominate in eastern Europe.

the BVS which is charged with supervising the progress of privatised industries, took over in January from the Treuhander which sold off 15,000 firms in record time though it left a debt of 256 billion marks used to modernise companies before privatisation.

In 1995, BVS expenditure, initially put at 17 billion marks, is expected to be two to three billion less than this figure due to an improvement in the performance of those firms it is still committed to help, BVS Chairman Heinrich Honef was quoted as saying.

Jordan's credit rating is up

(Continued from page 14)

part of Jordan's "comprehensive effort" to make itself more compatible with the requirements of international investment and should be seen as part of a package, that also includes the recently-endorsed Investment Promotion Law and tax reforms.

While setting the rating for Jordan, S&P said that its assessment of Jordan's ability to meet its foreign debt obligations was supported by "significant progress in strengthening public finances in recent years, aided by fiscal reforms and sizeable external debt relief."

"Cautious political liberalisation" measures at home, combined with improving ties with its neighbours, have bolstered the Kingdom's geopolitical position in the Middle East," it said.

Mr. Jaradat, in his comments at the press conference, noted that Jordan's foreign debt represented about 270 per cent of its gross domestic product five years ago compared to 92 per cent to-

day.

The objective is to bring it down further to less than 75 per cent, which will allow Jordan to "deal with the international financial community in a normal way," he added.

On the internal front, S&P referred to "the low stock of dollar debt, around 25 per cent of (gross domestic product), together with the Central Bank's demonstrated ability to keep inflation to single digits and contain it even during periods of acute political and financial stress."

Moody's commented that the rating it gave to Jordan "reflects the country's impressive rebound so far from the severe dislocations inflicted not only by balance of payment problems in 1989, but also by the Gulf war crisis of the following year."

"Jordan's ability to absorb the impact of these two shocks, which occurred in swift succession, reveals underlying economic and political strengths to that support the rating."

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IMF says Middle East economies must liberalise

By Suleiman Al Khalidi
Reuter

AMMAN — The International Monetary Fund (IMF) Monday urged Middle Eastern states to deregulate and liberalise if they were to benefit from the global economy.

"Domestic deregulation and the liberalisation of trade and payments regimes are two sides of the coin... some Middle East and North Africa countries... are among the most protectionist in the world," Stanley Fischer, first deputy managing director of the IMF, told delegates attending the Middle East and North Africa Economic Summit in Amman.

He said it was critical for the region's future to introduce key trade measures to reduce tariffs and non-tariff barriers, if it was to benefit from a trend towards more globalisation and integration of world markets.

Mr. Fischer said Middle East peace accords between former enemies "has prompted businessmen to begin transforming the economic possibilities created by peace into reality."

The region was potentially rich — it had six per cent of the world's population, a wealth of highly-skilled workers and a GDP of over \$600 billion, Mr. Fischer said.

"To reach this potential in this region, as in the rest of the world, the emphasis must be on a private sector led, outward oriented economic strategy, with a more dynamic export performance and greater integration into the world economy at its core," he explained.

"Unfortunately economies in many countries in the region are operating far below their potential," he added.

The IMF official cited the success of East Asia and signs of progress in eastern Europe.

Mr. Fischer, however, cited "real economic progress" in the region over the past year that "had contributed to a welcome improvement in the economic climate of the region."

He said Saudi Arabia, which has cut budget spending, had made "important moves to increase non-oil revenues and rationalise expenditure..."

Trade accords concluded between the Palestinians,

Jordan and Israel, should help increase regional trade, he added.

He said the EU's "Mediterranean Basin" policy was contributing to the region's "adjustment and reform."

The EU already has trade accords with Israel and Tunisia and is engaged in partnership talks with Egypt, Jordan and Morocco.

The IMF official, had special praise for the Palestinian Authority (P.A.) running self-rule areas, for improving its "budgetary performance and progress in building economic institutions." The P.A. had been criticised in the past for mismanagement.

The IMF official, stressed that frustrated business initiatives were due to lack of long-term finance in the region, necessitating a "well functioning financial system that would enhance domestic savings and channel resources to productive uses."

Mr. Fischer called on countries in the Middle East and North Africa region to "increase competition by removing barriers to foreign entry into banking and capital markets."

World Bank criticises closure of W. Bank, Gaza

AMMAN (AFP) — The World Bank hit out Tuesday at Israel's partial closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip which it said was a serious obstacle to Palestinian economic growth.

"This measure throws into doubt the development of the Palestinian economy which Israel otherwise says it wants to promote," Odinn Knudsen, World Bank official for the West Bank and Gaza, said at the Middle East economic summit in Amman.

"In Amman, Israel presented large infrastructure projects and called on the private sector to mobilise, while on the ground Palestinian businessmen cannot move around and exports are blocked," said Mr. Knudsen, the World Bank's permanent representative in the Palestinian territories.

He called for a "fair balance between security needs and the free traffic of people and goods which is vital to stimulate economic development."

PLO leader Yasser Arafat said Sunday in his opening speech to the Amman summit that Israel had closed off the West Bank and Gaza for a total of 200 days since the May 1994 launch of autonomy.

The closures had cost the Palestinians \$6 million — more than all the aid they had received, Mr. Arafat complained.

Mr. Knudsen added the closure came at a time when the Palestinian gross national product was falling and unemployment in Gaza had risen to 50 per cent.

But the Palestinians had also succeeded in boosting revenue to an estimated \$380 million this year, \$180 million more than expected, he said. They had also restricted their budget deficit to \$100 million, half the amount forecast.

The World Bank helps to channel international aid to the Palestinian self-rule authority.

Palestinians seek investors for east Jerusalem

AMMAN (R) — The political realities of the old Middle East were not allowed to cloud the economic dreams of the new Palestinian self-rule authority when PLO leader Yasser Arafat set out to woo foreign investors Monday.

"East Jerusalem enjoys unparalleled status," chirped the narrator of a film screened during a lunch given by Mr. Arafat for businessmen at the second Middle East and North Africa Economic Summit in Amman.

"We invite you to take part in its future," he said.

The Palestinian film, like speakers at the high-powered gathering, did not ask: "What status? What future?"

They did not mention that Israel annexed the eastern half of the city after capturing it in 1967 and says it has no intention of giving it back.

The Palestinians need private investors to fund their \$6 billion wishlist of projects to rebuild the Gaza Strip and West Bank after 28 years of Israeli occupation.

Powderkeg issues such as Jerusalem have been put off until the end of Israeli-PLO talks in order not to upset the slow handover of authority in the West Bank and Gaza.

But Palestinians believe now is the time to attract funds to east Jerusalem, which they claim as the capital of any future state.

"The best solution for the Jerusalem question is to start rebuilding now," Faisal Al Hussein, the senior PLO official in the city, told Reuters.

"Why should the Israelis object to this? I don't expect opposition from the Israeli government, perhaps from the municipality," he said. The city council is dominated by right-wing parties.

The men with the money agreed. "We are very serious about investing," businessman Sabih Masri said. He is a director of PADICO, a \$200 million holding company that is investing in infrastructure and real estate.

"The only restrictions are the Israelis," he added, referring to Israel's control of movements of people and goods into the Palestinian areas. He acknowledged that investment in east Jerusalem was "tough but we are doing it to establish our presence also."

Arab Bank Chairman Abdul Majid Shoman told Reuters some investors were waiting to see how PADICO performed before putting up money but many others had already committed funds.

"A lot of money has come in from outside," he said of investment in east Jerusalem.

Mr. Arafat, flanked by some of the wealthiest businessmen in the Palestinian diaspora, built his investment pitch on money to be made from the tourist boom expected for Christmas celebrations of the second millennium of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

He glossed over the fact that most of Jerusalem's Christian and Muslim holy places are in the Israeli-controlled east. He said Bethlehem would be transferred to the Palestinians in time for Christmas this year.

Tourism will be the mainstay of our economy," said tour operator Hani Abu Dayeh. Palestinians said 8,000 hotel rooms needed to be built in east Jerusalem for the year 2000 celebrations.

Palestinian businessmen they thought Mr. Arafat had provided political stability and security but said foreign investors were waiting to see whether this would hold.

"They also want to be sure they will not have problems with Arafat's style of doing business," said one investor.

"I promise you I will do my best to facilitate your participation in any of our or your projects," Mr. Arafat said, reminding his audience he had started out in business.

"You can trust my promise," he concluded.

World's currency markets move \$1,230 billion a day

ZURICH (R) — Global trading in the world's foreign exchange markets has jumped sharply in the last three years, according to a report by the Basle-based Bank for International Settlements (BIS).

Surveys conducted by central banks around the world in April showed an average daily turnover of \$1,230 billion in spot, outright forward and foreign exchange swap contracts, up from \$590 billion and \$820 billion respectively in April 1989 and April 1992.

Percentage changes in turnover in 1989-92 and 1992-95 suggested an acceleration in the rate of expansion, from 39 to 50 per cent.

But the BIS said the dollar's depreciation in the three years of April 1995 was heavier than in the previous three years, helping to raise the dollar value of non-dollar transactions. If calculated at

constant dollar exchange rates, growth in the two periods was fairly comparable at around 30 per cent.

The BIS's report follows September's publication of national data by most of the 26 central banks and monetary authorities that participated in the coordinated survey. It is confined to a preliminary overview of global turnover in traditional foreign exchange instruments.

A final report, which will include additional information about derivatives market activity, will be published later.

The BIS said the findings showed Britain increased its share of the global currency market to 30 per cent from 27 per cent three years ago. The United States was second with an unchanged 16 per cent, followed by Japan with 10 per cent, down from 11 per cent.

In terms of rankings, Hong Kong and Switzerland switched

positions, to fifth and sixth place respectively, behind Singapore and before Germany and France.

Top spot in the currency league still belongs to the dollar, which is involved in 83 per cent of deals compared with 82 per cent in 1992.

The German mark remains in second place, although its trading involvement slipped to 37 per cent from 40 per cent. There was also a decline in the weight of sterling, the Swiss franc and the ECU, more than offset by increases in the shares of the French franc and other EMS currencies.

The BIS said forward transactions grew at almost twice the rate of spot deals between 1992 and 1995, causing a significant change in the composition of trading. Only 43 per cent of turnover in April 1995 took place in the spot market, against 49 per cent three years earlier.

BUSINESS Daily

A review of news from the Arab World

Jordan registers trade surplus with Arab Gulf states

★ ★ A FRESH study prepared by the Ministry of Industry and Trade shows that the trade balance with all Arab Gulf countries between 1990-1995 was in Jordan's favour. Jordan's total exports to these countries amounted to JD 460 million while imports from that region totalled JD 402 million between 1990-1995. Saudi Arabia topped the list of Gulf countries with imports from Jordan amounting to JD 270 million during the period covered. The United Arab Emirates came in second with JD 93.8 million of imports followed by Bahrain (JD 52.5 million) and Qatar (JD 26.7 million). Oman ranked last as its imports from Jordan between 1990 to 1995 were only JD 5.8 million. Jordanian imports came from Saudi Arabia in the first place with a JD 266.7 million total. Bahrain ranked second with JD 41 million of exports to Jordan. Qatar's exports amounted to JD 37.6 million. Main Petra from the beginning of this year until the end of September. The number of tourists fruits and industrial products while the main imports were petroleum products and raw

materials necessary for plastic and chemical industries (Al Dustour).

Medical corporation to float new shares

★ ★ THE MANAGEMENT of the Jordan Medical Corporation (JMC) is preparing to float new shares for private subscription within a capital restructuring process. JMC Chairman Said Hamami said the corporation's present assets would help to implement new expansion plans. JMC was set up in 1999 and had posted good profits in 1994. Mr. Hamami said that trading in JMC shares would resume at the end of this year (Al Aswak).

Fees from Petra tourists exceed JD 4m

★ ★ A TOTAL of JD 4,160,159 in fees were collected from the 22,883 tourists who visited Petra from the beginning of this year until the end of September. The number of tourists fruits and industrial products while the main imports were petroleum products and raw

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET			
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - JORDAN			
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 31/10/1995			
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE TRADED JD	CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK PIG	180	4382	243.750
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	9200	41425	4.470
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	5650	6926	1.210
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	1400	3274	2.390
THE HOUSING BANK	2250	10013	4.450
JORDAN WOLF BANK	13880	15788	1.150
JORDAN ISLAND BANK	636	2339	3.660
UNION BANK FOR SAVING & INVESTMENT	250	935	3.620
BUSINESS BANK	1650	5844	3.540
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	1440	5359	3.720
ARAB BANK FOR INVESTMENT	18272	18361	1.010
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	73950	120308	1.580
BANKS - SECTOR	128767	274354	INDEX NUMBER: 192.24
			CHANGE: +0.667
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	19196	31745	1.660
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	2750	5610	2.020
ARAB BANK FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	2180	7093	3.300
JORDANIAN EXPATRIATES INVESTMENT HOLDING	250	268	1.130
SABAH PRIVATE UNIVERSITY	1000	1330	1.330
UNION BANK DEVELOPMENT CORP.	1500	1685	1.110
SERVICES - SECTOR	28846	47730	INDEX NUMBER: 128.00
			CHANGE: +0.114
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	7868	29091	3.700
THE ARAB POTASH	100	500	5.000
JORDAN PHOSPHATE REFINERY	830	7802	9.400
JORDAN TANNING	343	2553	7.600
THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	1657	5981	3.500
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	2350	12398	4.770
THE JORDAN PAPER MANUFACTURING	800	2460	3.070
ARAB LEADERS TRUST	2237	12077	5.400
WATERCO & FOUNDRY	6500	4420	0.680
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	5500	7865	1.430
NATIONAL INDUSTRIES	7050	7472	1.060
INDUSTRIAL PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	650	1190	1.830
JORDAN SULPHUR-CHEMICALS	4750	6258	1.310
ARAB CEMENT FOR PHARM & CHEMICALS	700	1400	2.000
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL SERVICES CO.	12750	24950	1.970
JORDAN NEW CABLE COMPANY	3750	5863	1.570
INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	32280	47384	1.460
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	90887	178073	INDEX NUMBER: 124.80
			CHANGE: +0.067
GRAND TOTAL	245720	500257	INDEX NUMBER: 158.92
			CHANGE: +0.415

Job Opportunity

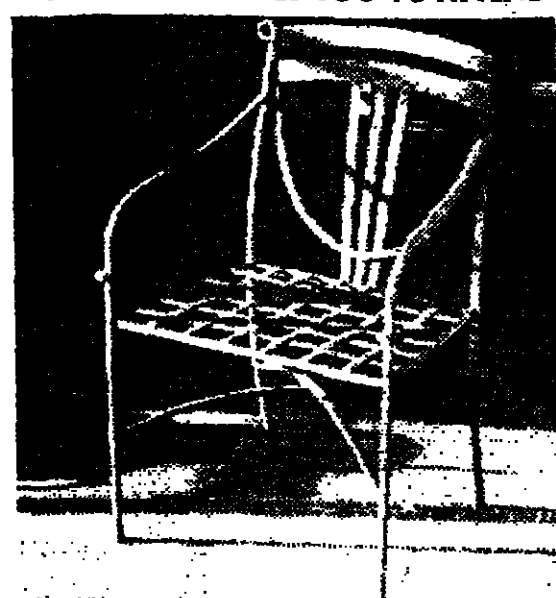
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- 1-3 years experience in fashion wear.
- Good command of the English language.

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Financial Markets

In co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets			
Currency	New York Close 30/10/95	Tokyo Close 31/10/95	
Swiss Franc	1.2165	1.2164	
Deutsche Mark	1.4886	1.4117	
Swiss Franc	1.1320	1.1328	
French Franc	4.8889	4.8935	
Japanese Yen	101.93	102.00	
European Currency Unit	1.3630	1.3638	

Eurocurrency Interest Rates			
Currency	1 MTH	3 MTH	6 MTH
U.S. Dollar	5.62	5.68	5.62
Swiss Franc	6.43	6.43	6.50
Deutsche Mark	5.47	5.47	5.47
Swiss Franc	1.81	1.81	1.81
French Franc	6.28	6.28	6.28
Japanese Yen	0.25	0.17	0.17
European Currency Unit	5.62	5.59	5.59

Precious Metals			
Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal
Gold	387.55	7.50	Silver
			5.35

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin			
Currency	Bid	Offer	
U.S. Dollar	0.7088	0.7100	
Swiss Franc	1.1137	1.1192	
Deutsche Mark	0.5066	0.5031	
Swiss Franc	0.6195	0.6226	
French Franc	0.1446	0.1453	
Japanese Yen	0.6937	0.6972	
Dutch Guilder	0.4467	0.4459	
Swedish Krona	0.0443	0.0445	
Italian Lira	0.0443	0.0445	
Belgian Franc	0.0443	0.0445	

Other Currencies			
Currency	Bid	Offer	
Bahraini Dinar	1.4620	1.4780	
Libyan Lira	0.043275	0.043275	
Saudi Riyal	0.1885	0.1898	
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3070	2.3670	
Qatari Riyal	0.1932	0.1945	
Egyptian Pound	0.5090	0.5200	
Omani Riyal	1.6330	1.6410	
UAE Dirham	0.1922	0.1933	
Greek Drachma	0.2875	0.3158	
Cypriot Pound	1.5275	1.5940	

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Tuesday.

One U.S. dollar	1.3436/46	Canadian dollar	1.4098/08
	1.5810/20	Deutsche marks	1.1380/90
	28.99/03	Swiss francs	4.8994/44
	1594.1/5.6	French francs	102.28/38
	6.6490/90	Italian lire	1594.1/5.6
	6.2400/50	Japanese yen	102.28/38
	5.4719/81	Swedish crowns	6.6490/90
	1.4150/60	Norwegian crowns	6.2400/50
	0.7607/12	Danish crowns	5.4719/81
	7.7310/20	Singapore dollars	1.4150/60
		Australian dollars	0.7607/12
		Hong Kong dollars	7.7310/20

One sterling	\$1.5760/70
Gold (ounce)	\$382.60/383.10

Save water... every drop counts!

Economy
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Crash at
Asian (AFP) — Asian economies sent large business...
...to the Amman...
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...large plenty to offer the...
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...businessmen to the first...
...of its kind last year in...
...the Moroccan city of Casab...
...bumped up its delega...
...to 40 businessmen for...
...the three-day Amman con...
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...shows increasing...
...interest in the re...
...the Israeli-Arab...
...processes develop...
...member of the delega...
...Hanan...
...will become in...
...important to the...
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...and its wealth of ex...
...and Yemeni...
...Institute for Internat...
...Studies in Tokyo...
...said Japanese com...
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...in the fields of transpor...
...communication and elec...
...display in the center...
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...co-financed with the...
...World Bank to the summit...
...for economic re...
...and Jordan for economic...
...as well as around 500...
...million to help construct...
...bridges between Jordan and...
...Lebanon...
...It is not yet clear...
...how that will be valuable...
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Computer
growing
DUBAI, United Arab Em...
... (AFP) — Computer...
...from Asia and the...
...are racing to grab a...
...larger share of the Middle...
...East market, using a...
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Yemen final
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SANA'A (R) — Yemen will...
...plans within a month...
...its southern port city...
...into a free trade...
...the official Saba News...
...has said...
...said President Ali...
...which instructed a...
...of experts to draw...
...plans for the zone...
...them by Nov. 20...
...Yemeni government is...
...for ways to revive...
...once bustling port...
...badly affected by a...
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Asians offer know-how, cash at Mideast summit

AMMAN (AFP) — Asian countries sent large business delegations to the Amman economic summit confident they have plenty to offer the Middle East in terms of finance and know-how.

Japan, which sent only three businessmen to the first summit of its kind last year in the Moroccan city of Casablanca, bumped up its delegation to 40 businessmen for the three-day Amman conference.

"It shows increasing Japanese interest in the region as the Israeli-Arab peace process develops," said a member of the delegation, Yoshiaki Hatanaka.

"Asia will become increasingly important to the Middle East because of its capital and its wealth of experience," said Yoshiaki of the Institute for International Economic Studies in Tokyo.

He said Japanese companies were interested in the large infrastructure projects in the fields of transport, communication and electricity on display at the conference.

Tokyo has also announced a total of \$151 million in loans co-financed with the World Bank, to the summit host Jordan for economic reform and telecommunications, as well as around \$20 million to help construct bridges between Jordan and Israel.

But it is not just Japan's finance that will be valuable

to the Middle East, Mr. Yoshiaki said.

"We have the experience of starting from zero level after World War II and reviving our economy to pre-war levels within 10 years. It is a good lesson for the Middle East," he added.

Hirokazu Oikawa, a professor at Japan's Kyorin university, said that Japanese companies were only "just discovering the eastern shores of the Mediterranean."

"Japan is being cautious. Once Syria and Lebanon are brought into the circle of peace, companies will adopt a much more aggressive approach," Mr. Oikawa explained.

Indonesian delegate head Asri Noer also said the Middle East could learn much from the "miracle of south-east Asia."

"We can tell countries here how we fought for investment, providing international companies with very attractive incentives," he said.

Haryono Eddyarto, president of the Indonesian trading company Excol, said Asian countries were better placed to help development in the region than Europe and the United States.

"These days the big market is in Asia, and that's what the Middle East should be concentrating on," he said.

"Also we have had the same problems with regulations, trade financing and customs

structure in the past, so we know the practical ways to overcome these problems rather than just talking about it."

He said his company was looking to deal at the Amman summit and had seen some interesting proposals in petrochemicals, power generation and tourism.

China, in contrast, believes it is at a similar stage of development to the Middle East after opening up its economy to the outside world in 1979.

"We are a developing country, so what we can offer is doing business with Middle East companies on the basis of equality and mutual interest," said Zhang Dianyi of the China Civil Engineering Construction company. "But we can't offer a large amount of capital and that might be a problem."

The company was heavily involved in building bridges, roads and dams in Iraq prior to the 1991 Gulf war, and now does a small amount of business with Israel, Jordan and Kuwait.

"We are now looking to expand our dealings in the Middle East," he said.

Zhang's company was one of six Chinese firms at Amman, compared to just one at the Casablanca summit in October 1994.

Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines and Thailand were also represented at the summit.

Summit launches MEMTTA

By Francesca Ciriaci
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Middle East Mediterranean Travel and Tourism Association (MEMTTA) was established Sunday according to the Amman Declaration, issued by the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Economic Summit.

MEMTTA was the first regional body created by the MENA summit. The objective of the new association "shall be to facilitate regional cooperation in travel and tourism... in order to promote and market the region as a tourism destination as well as to encourage and assist the development of the tourism industry serving the region," as read in the MEMTTA charter.

Egypt, Israel, the PLO on behalf of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), Cyprus, Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan signed the charter during a ceremony chaired by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan. According to a press statement, Turkey was to sign the charter Tuesday.

According to the text of the charter attached to the press statement, MEMTTA will "carry out destination marketing activities," will constitute an instrument for collaboration between the public and the private sector, will create a new kind of public/private partnership in the tourism sector, and will "serve as an instrument for integrating the region into global tourism networks."

The MEMTTA charter also states that education and training for the development of human resources in the field of tourism and the establishment of a data bank for the MENA region are activities the new association will carry out.

Article four of the association's charter says that membership in MEMTTA will be extended to regional official members, ("central authorities responsible for tourism"), regional public members ("other public bodies and associations"), and regional enterprises members, ("tourism-related enterprises, including airlines").

A workshop on tourism, held Monday morning at the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC), emphasised that MEMTTA represents a new kind of partnership between the governments, that constitute the policy making body of the association, and the private sector that is in charge of managing the association's activities.

Speaking at the workshop, Francesco Frangialli, deputy secretary-general of the World Tourism Organisation (WTO), expressed support for all regional projects cooperating in tourism and welcomed the creation of MEMTTA as the first regional body to result from the MENA summit.

Mr. Frangialli also said the WTO welcomes regional bodies, like MEMTTA, to join as affiliated members. He also called for rationality and cooperation in designing and managing tourism projects.

The idea of a regional tourism mechanism was first conceived at the MENA summit held in Casablanca last year, and the first general meeting and regional conference of MEMTTA is expected to be held in May 1996, according to a brochure issued by MEMTTA.

Multinational companies eye growing Mideast market

By Suleiman Al Khalidi
Reuters

AMMAN — Western multinational firms are laying groundwork to expand operations in the Middle East as progress in peace talks opens prospects for wider regional markets.

"We are very optimistic that the peace process will open up all kinds of investment opportunities in the Middle East," said Evan Jones, vice president, business development of Houston-based Amoco Petroleum Company.

The company, with over \$30 billion of annual sales, is a third owner of a joint venture company planning to build the "peace pipeline" to export LNG gas from Egypt to Gaza, Israel and Jordan.

"These projects continue to look more feasible as the peace process continues to go forward," he added.

In the telecommunications sector, many major telecoms firms are eyeing a rapidly expanding market as Middle Eastern countries rush to overhaul ageing networks, in increased competition to attract foreign investment and privatising parts of state-owned telecommunications operations.

Ericsson, the Swedish telecommunications giant, is looking at expanding post-peace regional market shares when future outlets open in Iran, Iraq and Syria.

"We see other countries who are not yet (in the peace process): Syria, Iraq and Iran, they definitely will need to expand their telecommunications... it is not yet there, but we intend to do what we can to get a share," said Goran Rasmussen, vice president, general manager of strategic

markets, at Stockholm based Ericsson Telecom A.B.

Charles Meyer, a legal consultant to European multinationals, said some of these firms "have very advanced studies."

Mr. Meyer said: "A lot of companies will come and invest in projects in this region... their intention is to be present at the very beginning of the developments. I am convinced that a lot of projects will be put into practice... I am convinced of prospects in the Middle East if there is peace, if Syria and Lebanon are joining the process."

Mr. Meyer said major European companies were "already involved in many public works projects and were organising fund-raising for key projects."

Businesses see wider prospects of integrated regional markets that did not exist before, with higher returns as countries compete to attract private capital in ambitious modernisation plans.

A U.S. petroleum executive who did not want to be identified said: "With the peace process allowing for greater integration, business opportunities are to follow."

Arab-Israeli stability "allows the possibility to look beyond national markets and this is what we have to find out to see how far that has developed."

Many however, say while regional stability allowed many multinationals who previously shunned considering operating in the region, the actual starting of concrete projects depended on many factors — nature of projects, financing, viability and first and foremost political stability.

Moroccan official stresses sound financial policies for successful privatisation

By Lola Keilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Privatisation could become a complete failure if investment laws are not accompanied with sound financial policies, Moroccan Minister of Privatisation Abdul Rahman Saaidi said Tuesday.

"As long as privatisation is forced on certain countries by the World Bank, resistance of it will continue and a conflict of interest will take place, even among members of the same government," Mr. Saaidi told press conference.

"Morocco had no choice but to push through privatisation policies, due to its large debts," he said.

Mr. Saaidi added the public sector was inefficient and financially incapable of carrying out all the development programme that is expected from it.

The private sector, he said, could shoulder some of the responsibility.

"They are more successful in terms of profit, but there is always a social price to pay," Mr. Saaidi said.

"In Morocco we need ten more years to achieve complete privatisation, but we do not have a successful formula to follow or give to the world," Mr. Saaidi added.

The financial policies which Mr. Saaidi believes are crucial to encourage privatisation are accountability and transparency which, he said, should involve implementing companies' law and liberalising trade law.

Mr. Saaidi said Morocco has presented a number of projects for MENA but did not sign agreements.

Cyprus to pump \$2 billion into development until '98

NICOSIA (R) — Cyprus is to spend more than \$2 billion in the next few years on development projects, the island's Planning Bureau said in a report.

A basic objective of the five-year plan, from 1994 to 1998, is to restructure and strengthen the competitiveness of the island's economy and its harmonisation to

European Union rules, said the report.

Cyprus applied for full European Union (EU) membership in 1990. Accession talks are expected to begin six months after an inter-governmental summit in 1996.

The bureau said the aim of the plan was to achieve a real annual growth rate of four

per cent to ensure conditions of full employment, economic stability and convergence with the Maastricht criteria.

Over the five year period total expenditure on development is put at around 980 million Cyprus pounds, compared to 626 million pounds (\$1.37 billion) spent over the previous five year period.

Development of road networks and airports absorbs 24 per cent of the budgeted amount, while reference is also made to the construction of a university building and a new general hospital.

The report states that Cyprus will have to switch policies and adjust to EU directives as regards state aid, and must revise state subsidies given to farmers.

Computer giants race for growing M.E. market

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AFP) — Computer giants from Asia and the West are racing to grab a bigger share of the Middle East market, taking advantage of a peace breakthrough and economic and copyright reforms.

Although its size is relatively small compared with the industrial countries, the Middle East computer market is growing as fast as 15 per cent annually, more than double the average world rate, experts said.

From around \$1 billion five years ago, the market turnover in the Arab region has jumped to more than \$1.5 billion and the figure is set to surge in the coming years as regional states push ahead with reforms.

"Apart from the economic upturn, the introduction of laws to protect copyrights and intellectual property is also a crucial factor that is attracting world firms to this market," Wahid Atallah, general manager of the Dubai World Trade Centre, told AFP.

The centre is organising the Middle East's biggest computer show, in which more than 1,000 companies are exhibiting their latest technology.

Such electronics and information technology giants as Lotus, Microsoft, IBM, Compaq, Oracle, Sony, and Toshiba are among the participants at the Gulf Information Technology Exhibition 95, which opened in Dubai Saturday.

The companies from the United States, Britain, France, Japan, Taiwan, Singapore and such Arab countries as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are displaying a wide range of hardware and software systems, personal computers, communication equipment and other products.

"There is a strong competition in the Middle East among world computer companies. Some want to enter the market and others are seeking to maintain or boost their share as the market is steadily growing for both hardware and software," said Robert Butt, a U.S. exhibitor at the annual show.

Competition has prompted major companies to increase investment to continuously develop their programmes and produce more Arabic software in banking, insurance and other sectors to cater for local tastes.

Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil producer and exporter, is by far the biggest computer market in the Middle East, accounting for nearly 55 per cent of the turnover. But Egypt is recording the fastest growth in computer business as it has the largest population in the region, estimated at 60 million.

While Western firms remain the dominant computer power in the area, controlling nearly 65 per cent, Asian producers are steadily boosting their share through cutting prices and upgrading quality, dealers said.

Figures obtained from the four-day exhibition showed personal computers are recording the fastest growth rates, standing at around 30 per cent per year. Between 150,000 and 200,000 sets are sold annually in the Arab

World.

The software and data base industry is also growing fast, with a turnover of more than \$200 million annually.

"The computer business, hardware and software, is set for large growth in the coming years in this region as there is an increasing public awareness of the importance of such an industry in this age," said P. George at the Indian pavilion, one of the biggest software stalls at the exhibition.

"You can say there is a sort of an onslaught by world companies, which are also encouraged by measures to protect intellectual property," he added.

Several Arab countries, mainly those in the oil-rich Gulf, have enforced legislations to protect copyrights and intellectual property. The measures followed pressure from the United States which had complained its companies were losing more than \$2 billion a year because of piracy.

Officials in Saudi Arabia and the UAE, which account for around two thirds of the Arab computer market, have reported progress in a campaign to wipe out piracy in computer and other audio-visual systems. Their measures include regular inspection of shops and heavy fines against violators.

Organisers of GITECH said more world firms were looking for local agents at the show while others were negotiating for sale deals.

"The exhibition is an opportunity for computer makers to promote their products in the region and negotiate deals with possible customers," one said. "Apart from deals, they sell to the public at an adjoining shopping centre. Last year such sales exceeded \$5 million."

Yemen finalising plans for free zone in Aden

ADEN (R) — Yemen will finalise plans within a month to turn its southern port city of Aden into a free trade zone, the official Saba News Agency has said.

Saba said President Ali Abdullah Saleh chaired a meeting which instructed a committee of experts to draw up final plans for the zone and submit them by Nov. 20.

The Yemeni government is looking for ways to revive Aden, a once bustling port which was badly affected by a siege during a civil war last year between the government in Sanaa and southern separatists based in the city.

Saba said the meeting reviewed a report by Dirham Abda Noman, the chairman of the Aden Free Zone, on investment and infrastructure projects including industrial parks, storage facilities and a port for containers.

Some 37,000 hectares in 15 different sites have been allocated for the free zone area. Saba also said the meeting reviewed negotiations with companies and foreign investors interested in establishing projects in the area, but gave no details.

The decision to turn Aden into a free zone area was made shortly after the 1990 merging of former south and north Yemen into a single state. Aden was the capital of South Yemen.

Mr. Saleh declared Aden Yemen's winter capital after the civil war and has said he wants to revive the city's economic life.

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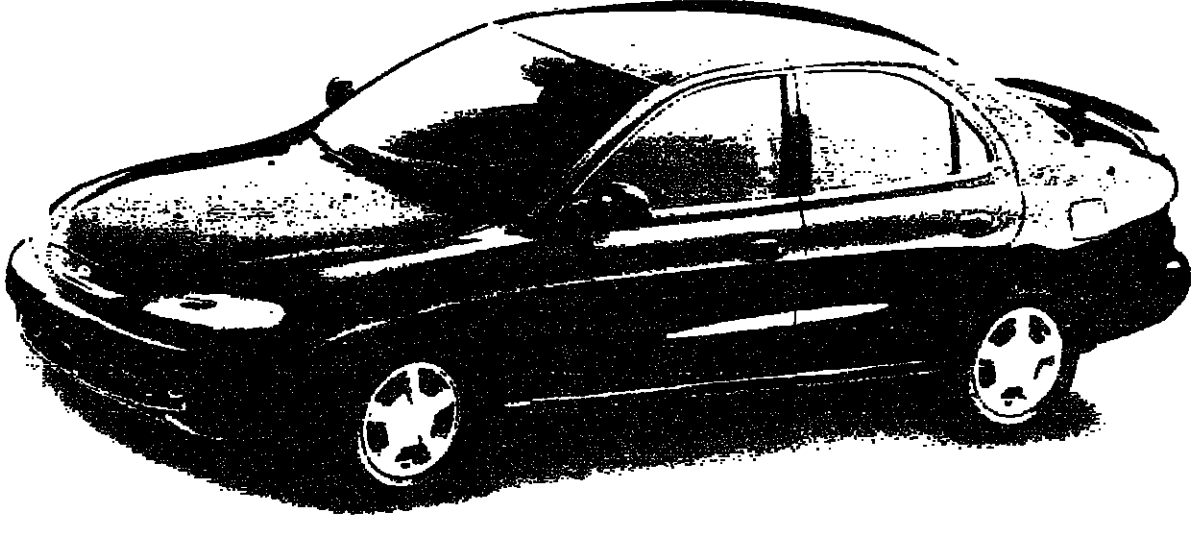
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Stockholm might bid for 2004 Games

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Stockholm will bid for the 2004 Olympics, as long as the government approves a financial guarantee, the city council decided late Monday.

The vote, taken after a three-hour debate, was 72 in favour and 27 against the bid.

The main parties in the council, including the Social Democratic Party and conservative Moderate Party, voted in favour of the Olympic bid.

Bids for the Summer Games must be presented next year to the International Olympic Committee, which will decide the host city in 1997.

Stockholm last hosted the Summer Olympics in 1912, and also served as the equestrian venue for the 1956 Games that were staged in Melbourne, Australia.

All major sports organisations, including the Swedish Olympic Committee, have expressed their support for the bid. A majority of Stockholmers, 73 per cent, favoured the

bid provided no tax money is involved, a recent poll said.

Stockholm proposes a budget of 12 billion kronor (\$1.7 billion). The main cost will involve the construction of a new 80,000-seat Olympic stadium.

The 1912 Olympic stadium is still used for international competition, including athletics.

Some doubts have been raised about the planning committee's estimates that lottery profits could amount to a fifth of the budget.

Other contenders Stockholm faces include Rome, Italy; Cape Town, South Africa; Istanbul, Turkey; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Buenos Aires, Argentina; San Juan, Puerto Rico; St. Petersburg, Russia; Seville, Spain; and Lyon or Lille in France.

China has not confirmed yet whether it will submit a bid. Beijing lost by two votes to Sydney, Australia, in the vote for the 2000 Games.

Tearful Leconte postpones final bow

PARIS (AFP) — Henri Leconte, playing in his last Paris Indoor Open, gave the noisy Bercy Stadium crowd just what they wanted on the first day of the \$2.25 million event late Monday.

The 32-year-old Frenchman, currently ranked 149th and due to retire after next year's French Open, postponed his final curtain bow on the centre-court for at least another round when he beat American baseliner Aaron Krickstein 7-5, 6-3 in 75 minutes.

He now plays eighth-seed Sergi Bruguera of Spain.

Leconte, twice a semi-finalist here, typically blew hot and cold and mixed the sensational with the over-ambitious. But his inimitable and exciting brand of tennis delighted the partisan home spectators and produced a night of nostalgia and emotion.

Two games later, however, Leconte was back at his best and keeping the pressure on the American he clinched the set at a fourth attempt on Krickstein's serve.

In the second set, the American, who had never beaten Leconte in four previous encounters, broke to go 3-3 clear but Leconte immediately surged back.

Rocking Krickstein's hard-hitting baseline defence with a superb mixture of blistering returns, flashing passing shots and superb stop-volleys, a rampant Leconte didn't drop another game.

In the day's other matches, Alexander Volkov, hoping for some impressive performances in the French capital to cement a place in Russia's Davis Cup team for the December final against the United States, struggled to come to terms with some big-serving from French qualifier Daniel Courcol.



Henri Leconte

footed, 26-year-old Dutch left-hander Jan-Henrik Davids.

Davids, a qualifier ranked a lowly 413th, gave Lionel Roux of France a taste of his own medicine by scoring a 6-2, 3-6, 6-3 win.

Twelve months ago it was the 22-year-old Roux, currently ranked 77th, who was doing the giantkilling by beating Germany's Michael Stich in the second-round.

Other first day winners were experienced Americans David Wheaton and Richey Reneberg, Byron Black of Zimbabwe, Mark Woodforde of Australia and Jakob Hlasek of Switzerland.

Hlasek, the only player who has competed in all 10

editions of the tournament since it was launched in 1986, raced to an impressive 6-1, 6-3 victory over Bernd Karbacher of Germany.

Woodbridge saw off the awkward Jim Grabb of the United States 6-1, 6-3.

Wheaton crushed Italy's Renzo Furlan 6-2, 6-3.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Ferrari gears up in Middle East

MARANELLO, Italy (R) — Luxury sports car maker Ferrari said on Monday it was opening new outlets in the Middle East and Far East to help capitalise on a boom in sales. The Italian firm, owned by Fiat SpA, said Global sales shot up 25 per cent over the first nine months of 1995.

"By the end of the year we expect to have sold some 3,300 cars against 2,792 in 1994," a spokeswoman at the firm said. Ferrari said in a statement it had opened an office in Shanghai on Monday, its second sales outlet in China. It was also poised to open new showrooms in Dubai and Malaysia. The company said sales in the Far East and among Pacific states was helping drive Ferrari forward.

"Ten years ago this area represented barely three per cent of Ferrari sales. Today it accounts for over 15 per cent," the company's statement said.

Sainz back with Toyota

PARIS (AFP) — Carlos Sainz will rejoin Toyota, with whom he won two world championships in 1990 and 1992, next season. The Spaniard has been driving for Subaru for the last two seasons. He is neck and neck with Scottish team-mate Colin McRae going into the RAC Rally of Britain after winning last week's Catalunya Rally. Toyota also said they had parted company with their technical director Dieter Bulling after world champion Didier Auriol of France was disqualified from the Catalunya Rally. Auriol lost his fourth place when scrutineers discovered his Toyota Celica's turbo air-intake was illegal. The disqualification cost Auriol any chance in the world championship which finishes with the RAC on Nov. 19-22.

Bolton upset Arsenal 1-0

BOLTON, England (AP) — Forward John McGinlay scored a first-half goal as Bolton upset Arsenal 1-0 Monday in an English Premier League match. After Arsenal pressed in the first 15 minutes, McGinlay broke through in the 35th on a 15-yard (metre) shot off a pass from Alan Stubbs to give Bolton the lead and only its second victory of the season. It was only the sixth goal yielded this season by Arsenal in league play and its first goal allowed in 433 minutes. Arsenal, suffering only its second loss of the year, pressed throughout the second half but failed repeatedly to beat the stretched but poised Bolton defense. English international David Platt came on with 12 minutes to play — his first appearance in more than a month after being out with an injury.

Europe's best head for Glasgow

PARIS (AFP) — Rangers are hoping for a sensational victory over Juventus and Celtic will be looking to beat Paris St. Germain this week, as Europe's top clubs head for Glasgow.

Winless after three matches, Rangers must beat the Italians at Ibrox to keep alive their already remote chances of qualifying from Group C. Juventus, who have won all three of their games, made a mockery of the Scots in Turin two weeks ago, playing them off the field in a 4-1 rout.

The tables were turned in the Calcio on Sunday, when Juventus were trounced 4-0 by Lazio, but the hiding may well have given the Italians extra fire.

Coach Marcello Lippi was sanguine about his men's performance in Rome.

"I take full responsibility for the defeat," he said. "I fielded a team which was tired and lacked vision in every department. Clearly, I've not made a good job of handling the fixture list."

On the positive side, Lippi should have two first team regulars back from injury — French midfielder Didier Deschamps and libero Pietro Vierchowod.

But he may also decide to rest strike partners Alessandro Del Piero and Fabrizio Ravanelli, leaving Gianluca Vialli and Michele Padovano.

who is also back from injury, to lead from the front.

England playmaker Paul Gascoigne, who missed the roaring in the Stadio Delle Alpi, returns to the Rangers line-up for his first Italian encounter since leaving Lazio.

"I can't do it on my own and it will be very tough indeed for us," Gascoigne said. "We must attack from the word go. We will have to work really and when we get the ball we must try and keep it."

"Then we will have to try and make chances for the forwards but we know we got a lesson from Juventus in the first game."

The other title favourites, defending champions Ajax Amsterdam, have an easy fixture against Grasshoppers in Zurich, having already beaten the Swiss 3-1 a fortnight ago.

Ajax, 6-1 winners at the weekend, have a 100 per cent record in both the Dutch and Champions leagues and have so far conceded only a single goal in European action.

Group rivals Real Madrid are looking for more fun against Ferencvaros, after a 6-1 walkover last month. However, Real's Chilean striker Ivan Zamorano and libero Fernando Hierro are both doubtful with muscle strains.

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